R. VENKATA RATNAM:
MESSAGE AND MINISTRATIONS
VOL. II.

II - VI 20.-

THE

MESSAGE AND MINISTRATIONS

OF

DEWAN BAHADUR

R. VENKATA RATNAM,

M. A., L.T.,

Principal Emeritus, Pittapur Rajah's College, Cocanada.

EDITED,

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE,

BY

V. RAMAKRISHNA RAO, M, A., L. T.,

Principal, Pittapur Rajah's College, Cocanada.

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P. Venkata Ratnam.

UNTO
THE GRATEFULLY-CHERISHED
MEMORY
OF
MY EVER-REVERED
'PRADHANACHARYA',

REV. W. M.

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Page	Line	*For*	*Read*
vi	4	deed	dead
vii	14	him	Him
xiii	22	ute	utes
xvi	25	wizard ?	wizard
70	5	inchastity	unchastity
91	25	ought	aught
124	3	many	may
128	9	the equality	equality
	20	price	priced
134	21	Theim	Theism
143	5	nutriments	nutriment
149	1	ice,	snow,
154	25	very	every
164	3	guides	guide
167	21	growth.	progress.
169	18	the	that
	25	hand	head
184	2	beep	deep
220	17	of God	of God,
222	22	Thine	thine
234	3	down	dawn
253	11	of all	of

257	25	give	gives
267	5	to	for the fragrance-laden breath of heaven to
272	25	but the child	but the parent
299	18	adoring	adorning
312	3	life	being
315	19	Invaluable,	invaluable,
316	3	living	loving
344	3	but	that
355	23	*lingnoe*	*linguae*
358	11	to a	a
	17	Vaishnavism.	to Vaishnavism.
377	3	Europe,	Europe,"
391	25	ne-	en-
397	25	one	our

Om !

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

Last *maharnavami* witnessed the presentation of the opening volume of this series amid the sweet rejoicings and solemn commemorations of the Master's Diamond Jubilee. And now to the wide circle of fellow-believers and admirers, friends and old pupils, this next return of the auspicious birthday renews the warmest greetings of the spirit with one more love-offering—a second wreath of fragrant flowers from an Eden-heart where spring still reigns, even as winter gathers fast upon the stately head,

Since the 'pentecost' of that memorable occasion, the twelvemonth just elapsed has known no greater bliss than in the unqualified testimony from different points of the compass, far and near, to the worth and value of the first instalment of *The Message and Ministrations*. It will more than suffice to reproduce here, as a peculiarly precious specimen, one such token of approba-

tion over the honoured name of the great living authority on Comparative Religion, the Principal Emeritus of Manchester College, Oxford, and one of the patriarchs of the Unitarian 'household' in our 'Father's western home.'

"11, Marston Ferry Road,
"Oxford,
"June 2nd.' 23.

"Dear Principal Ramakrishna Rao,

"I am sorry to have been so long in thanking you for the kind gift of your volume of the addresses of Mr. R. Venkata Ratnam. I have only recently returned from some weeks' absence from home, and have been very fully occupied with the preparation of some lectures for a School of Theology which I am concerned in organising. Your account of Mr. Ratnam's many activities is deeply interesting. The spirit of service pervades his whole life, and your record shows how one man's earnestness and power quickens others and calls forth the best in them for the welfare of their brethren. His noble address on Ram Mohan Roy I have read with the warmest sympathy, and his prayers testify to the warmth of his joy in communion with his Maker. The influence o

such a Teacher at the head of a College must have been profound; as he is still in what we consider the fulness of vigour and maturity of experience, I trust that he may have many years yet in which to enlighten and inspire others by his faith and eloquence. The Brahma Samaj should win numbers to spiritual religion when it can utter its great truths by such a voice. With the best wishes for its progress,

" believe me, sincerely yours,
" J. Estlin Carpenter."

As this brief note speaks volumes of the fervent sympathy and the penetrating insight born of the sympathy of a far-off eminent leader of liberal religious thought and work, so even with the exactness of immediate touch and intimate grasp, it presents a beautiful and none too strongly worded epitome of the distinguishing traits of a nobly gifted personality and his abounding, abiding influence for God and goodness in our own midst. After this, no more than a passing reference will be necessary to a few other representative tributes. " Impressed once more "

" with the high degree of culture and personal force that is to be found among the members of the Brahmo Samaj, " *The Inquirer*, a London journal of free religious fellowship, cordially recognises "the significance of Indian Theism" as reflected in the volume with its " fervour of oriental piety " and "exuberance of language," its " soundness of sense and balance of judgment that are especially welcome as evidence of the best type of Indian thought today." And it concludes, about the author, with the words, " A teacher of many in his great land, he would be a teacher of respect for it and its children in this country. " Next, as to the reception accorded in our own "great land, " Pandit Sitanath Tattwabhushan, in *The Indian Messenger*, welcomes with " unfeigned satisfaction" "this last great contribution to our religious literature, " which he would devoutly see " find its way to all pious homes and hearts." The author he counts as " one of those rare individuals who become widely known and deeply honoured through the

sweet odour of their personal character and the influence it exerts on those around them." The "splendid diction" receives from him the just yet generous encomium that "if any were to read this book with no other object than that of learning English, he would find in it a most valuable help." The doctrinal parts, in his weighty opinion, depict "in bright and attractive colours and in a way at once engaging and inspiring" "the profound and uplifting character of Brahmoism as a faith and a creed." The devotional portions disclose "a soul pious to its very core and yet enriched with the rare virtues of deep modesty and penitent humility." Even the personal sketches "lose their personal and private character in emphasising the universal principles illustrated in the lives dealt with and in revealing the author's tender love and profound veneration for great and noble souls." The Madras *Christian College Magazine*, the organ of the author's own *alma mater*, notices in a review by one of its learned Professors, the Rev.

A. G. Hogg, the same glowing qualities of "eloquent and emotional utterance," "eloquent and ornate phraseology," "in commemorating the illustrious deed" as well as "in religious meditation and exhortation," and not only "the acuteness of a reflective mind" but "a moral elevation and a spiritual tenderness" "in combating erroneous teaching." Along this latter line, it is further observed, the "style, without disdaining figure and ornament, becomes more restrained in order to be the fit vehicle of solid thought and effective argument." "Edifying and inspiring" is the phrase in which the reviewer in the leading Indian journal, *The Modern Review* of Calcutta, sums up the common impression about the work of one "held in high veneration not only in the Deccan but also in other parts of the country, especially in Bengal." Notably the *aradhanas* (adorations) in that "treasury of pious sentiments and devotional thoughts" Babu Sasi Bhushan Talukdar of Tangail, an esteemed elder of the New Dispensation

Brahma Samaj, finds to be " so sweet, so noble, so soul-inspiring that I have scarcely met them anywhere else, the writings of our beloved Minister, Keshub Chandra Sen, and Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar excepted". "The book," he adds, "in the beauty of its language and the sublimity of its thoughts stands almost unrivalled." And then, the characteristic spirit in which these and similar marks of unmeasured appreciation are received ! " I feel deeply thankful for the venerable Dr. Carpenter's very gracious letter Reflecting on it, my eyes moistened, my head bowed, in gratitude to him who deigns to transmit a ray from His altar even into common dust ! " "Herewith dear brother Talukdar's very kind letter. But truly it has evoked many sighs in course of the day: talking in Heaven, living in Hell ! Good God, when is this misery to end ?"

With such touching assurances as to what has already been offered, —equalled in their strength and sweetness only by the genuine 'unconsciousness' and, more

than that, the positive self-abasement of the devout genius of the author,—the continuance of the editorial task, amidst its besetting difficulties, has naturally been sustained by no small degree of pious exhilaration. That joy, that enthusiasm, now is crowned with the confident hope that, at every point and even on a surface view, enough will be found, in this fit successor to the Jubilee Volume, to arrest attention and engage interest, to afford delight and provide edification.

The strong impulse to merge the purveying editor in the commending reviewer through something like a close survey of the rich content of the work or even a critical estimation of the distinctive excellences of its several parts, must needs be resisted at this yet early stage in the execution of the entire plan. As in the case of the Indian Theistic Conference Presidential Address in the prior volume, the 'place of honour' is assigned here to the 'monumental' disquisition of 1901 upon the 'first principles' of social

reform in the vital relations of the sexes —a remarkable thesis originally contributed to Mr. C. Y. Chintamani's valuable symposium on *Indian Social Reform*. Thrown off, 'under inspiration,' in the midst of dreary and heavy routine toils as Chairman of the Kistna District Primary Examination Board knocking about from camp to camp, this true receptacle of the very life-blood of the Peter the Hermit of our Purity Crusade elicited at the time the decisive verdict that it was "worth its weight in gold" from such a competent judge as the late Mr. G. Subrahmanya Iyer, while helping through the said compilation after the venerated Justice Ranade's demise. It may also be recalled how the same essay, in that "it points the way and evokes the spirit in which a great reform must be carried out," was included by the then scholarly and judicious editor of *The Christian College Magazine*, the late Prof. F. W. Kellett, among the triad marked out by him for especial praise, and thus placed by the side of the venerable Sir Dr. R. G.

Bhandarkar's 'paper' on the Social History of India, which "gives an equipment of learning to the reformer," and the late Rao Bahadur W. M.Kolhatkar's on Widow-Marriage, which "gives the encouragement that comes from the record of victories already won". Next to the *magnum opus* here in the Purity Group appear its four plainer pendants with their homely picture of the uses of 'associations' and 'pledges' and their ringing-bells of 'call' and 'exhortation' for the organised promotion of righteousness in social life through the resolute endeavour, above all, to 'realise the mother' in personal experience. Will it be too much to suggest to the younger section of readers, in particular, that these may with advantage be taken up for perusal before (instead of after) it, thus to serve as a sort of preliminary explication of its more abstruse portions? After the close-knit discourse on the interdependence of 'ideals, self-culture and character' as, respectively, "the uplifting force," "the effective method," and "the resultant bless-

ing", a selection of seven pleasant 'articles' follows, comprising the happy harmonisation, in 'aim and outlook,' of "East and West, the Spiritual and the Practical, the Speculative and the Active"; the sweet sublimation of 'the golden rule' of the love of one's neighbour as oneself into 'the highest law' of "self-denying love for God and His world"; the clear deduction of "the twin principles of Catholicity and Synthesis" from their vital source in the Fatherhood and the Unity of the Godhead; the relentless refutation of a respected Mahamahopadhyaya's orthodox position as to 'the seat of authority in religion', with the incidental examination of the Christian dogma of eternal hell and the Hindu doctrines of reincarnation, the efficacy of animal sacrifices and the oneness of the 'ism' despite its diversity of sects and schools; the reasoned exposition of the inevitable and paramount place of 'prayer and worship' in religious life; the varied interpretation of the familiar concept of spiritual 'hunger and thirst'; and

the reassuring attestation of "the sweetest, the loveliest, the loftiest of all God's sublime attributes", that of *Pathithapavana* (Purifier of the fallen). As the first and largest set of 'Addresses and Articles', thus all too poorly outlined, should prove worthy of any moralist-divine, so the next two of "Services and Sermons", "Prayers and Meditations", would rejoice the heart of any mystic-devotee of any time or clime. Fervent, beatific outpourings ever 'on the Mount', they form a fresh batch of the models and marvels of devotional literature, laying under contribution the richest resources of language and the deepest harmonies of emotion to sound the whole gamut of spiritual experience. What cosmic comprehensiveness of sweep, what 'profundis'-piercing penetrativeness of insight, what apocalyptic vividness of realisation stand revealed here, whether in the longer or the shorter, in the general congregational or the special occasional ministrations! Not for cursory perusal or compendious analysis are they, but for constant ponder-

ing in the quiet hour when the Lord "maketh me to lie down in green pastures" and "leadeth me beside the still waters". Among 'Appreciations and Reminiscences' of "the galaxy of Indian Worthies," in the fourth and closing division, will be read with delight the interesting sketch of "the holy life" and "the glorious work" of the God-intoxicated, "immortal Saint of Nuddea," with its apt proem on History as the epic of Divinity and Biography as the essence of History; the striking contrast-portraitures of the antiquarian and the humanist, "the great Rajendra Lal and the good Iswara Chandra"; the succinct review of "the standard biography of the great and good Brahmananda" Kesava Chandra Sen; the solemn *requiem* over the untimely ashes of "the people's tribune", Gopala Krishna Gokhale; and, finally and fittingly, the charming tribute of love and gratitude to the Master's own Master and "the Mahamahopadhyaya of Southern India", the Rev. Dr. William Miller, to whose revered memory the

volume is inscribed with sweet seasonableness. But whatever the theme, the appeal throughout is to the deepest and most enduring elements in our nature. The many moods 'sing to one clear harp in divers tones', voicing naught but the same word, the sweet word, the suggestive word, the stimulating word, altogether the salutary word. In the main, the same old marks will be perceived of a genius titanic enough to defy the ordinary standards of measurement. The moving, majestic language itself offers a most refined intellectual treat—an inviting feast of chasteness and elegance, dignity and cadence, opulence and eloquence; and, indeed, a refreshing contrast to many a sordid satisfaction of the garish day. The searching moral idealism, not less tender towards weakness than trenchant against vice, reaches the cleansing ray, rather than the chastising rod, through all the crusts of custom and convention down to the very fountains of being in feeling and fancy. And the 'pure serene' of the pervasive

spiritual atmosphere, even when stirred by the recurring note of personal contrition, wafts the soul close unto the 'mercy-seat' in a 'present Paradise'. Here surely, in no narrow sense of ethical culture, is a new "friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit"—such as to call forth a snatch of the classic acclaim of "some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken"! If there is little of noisy polemic, there is nothing, too, of mere antiquarian interest in religion or of sheer ascetic abstraction from the world. Far from this, the outlook ranges conterminous with the whole area of life in the vast variety of all its bearings. All the same, not the prevailing predominance alone but the regulative regnancy as well is claimed by 'the better part', aye, 'the one thing needful' from the strict Monotheistic—if you will, the purer Theo-monistic, the 'higher Pantheistic'—stand-point at once sublimely transcendental and intensely practical. And that, as will be manifest throughout, is, in relation to the All-in-

all, a quenchless passion for attuned absorption, with its alternating phases of writhing anguish over separation and rapturous ecstasy over reunion. Hence, even as 'ye shall know' a man by his friends, the favourite fellowship in the orbit of habitual movement at the veriest perihelion of faith is that of a glorious constellation in which are readily discerned the spirits of Kabir and Chaitanya, Saadi and Jaluluddin Rumi, Madame Guyon and Miss Underhill, Maharshi Devendranath and Brahmananda Kesava Chandra. And it is the sage and the saint, the devotee and the mystic, that shines forth with "the vision and the faculty divine" in and through the recondite scholar and the felicitous stylist, the eloquent speaker and the acute dialectician, the red-cross knight of purity and the stalwart foe of every species of iniquity and idolatry, the silent upbuilder of personal characters and the ardent inspirer of practical beneficences. The wonder to many is—and yet what wonder?—that the wizard?-skill of the tongue-

is unfailingly in evidence beside the 'Quaker'-tremor of the spirit. So did the good Frances Power Cobbe declare of the great James Martineau that " with a jewelled crozier he shepherded his flock and always led them to the uplands of thought"!

Between the present and the preceding volume, if anything, one difference will perhaps be traced. While the one with its free-blown spontaneity and exuberance represents more, so to speak, the 'romantic', the other with its polished trimness and embellishment reflects more the 'classical' type of self-expression. Unlike its predecessor, which sprang a clean surprise upon him, this volume has secured, in the *final* form, an incalculable enhancement of high values through the Master's own *verbal* revision of the earlier writings and the reported echoes of the later utterances (all extempore). Over this piece of good fortune and the practical *imprimatur* of its benign approval of a responsible undertaking it is not for words to spell out the inmost sense of thankful

relief and satisfaction. As to supplies from the 'reporting pencil' of the Vighneswaras unto our Vyasa, for No. XIV of the contents the obligation is owed to Mr. P. Ramaswami, M. A.; and for Nos. IV, XV-XVIII and XX-XXV to Mr. M. Rammurthi, to whom the old debt immense may only be renewed, as it cannot be repaid, for the unreserved surrender of his whole file of materials. The written articles, Nos. II, VII-XIII and XXVIII-XXX, belong to the period of the conduct of the *Brahma Prakasica* and the *Fellow-Worker* of the Southern India Brahma Samaj referred to in the Introduction to Volume I.

The span of full forty years separating the earliest *juvenilia* of 1882, like 'Prayer and Worship,' from the latest evangel of 1922, 'Sadhana: its Meaning and Method,' will serve fully to explain the inequalities of standard, such as they are. At the same time, it will help clearly to illustrate the underlying unity and continuity of conception as also the growing clarity and intensity of realisation. Well may

it, then, impart to the 'chosen vessel' of Grace a grateful, soothing assurance of the Pilgrim's Progress attained through those fruitful years to which one more is happily added today. And well may our profit-laden hearts also carry to the altar of the All-giver the incense of devout thankfulness for this ' guide, philosopher and friend'—" a living and aspiring soul," as Dr. James H. Cousins, the poet-friend of India, called him the other day while acknowledging the first volume; " an earnest and genuine worker" " whose work is one of pure love and self-sacrifice" and "about whose genuine devotion to the cause there can be only one opinion," as the illustrious Ranade, " that ' born prince' among the educated sons of India" (p. 62), described him, among other elect ones, in the Annual Address at the Indian Social Conference of 1898; and "my future hope for the Brahma Samaj in Southern India", as the late Mr. Mannava Butchayya Pantulu, the 'architect' of the Madras Samaj, characterised him even

earlier still, in 1884, at the first introduction to the future *'guru,'* Pandit Sivanath Sastri. So far as the editorial labours are concerned, the editor must take upon himself the entire responsibility for all inevitable blemishes which none can more keenly regret than he. Lastly, as for the good reader, blessed is he as, through the following pages, it will be given to him to glimpse somewhat of

" the calm beauty of an ordered life,
Whose very breathing is unworded praise!
A life that stands, as all true lives have stood,
Firm-rooted in the faith that God is good"!

Cocanada,
Maharnavami,
18-10-1923

V. Ramakrishna Rao.

ADDRESSES
AND
ARTICLES.

SOCIAL PURITY AND THE ANTI-NAUTCH MOVEMENT. (1901)

"There is but one temple in the world, and that temple is the body of man."—*Novalis.*

"The crucial index of a man's character is, as a rule, his relation to the opposite sex."—*W. T. Stead.*

"The life of the nation depends on the life of the home, and that of the home depends on the purity of the individual. " —

Dr. Moorhouse, Bishop of Manchester.

"Not to turn human brutal, but to build
Divine on human, pleasure came from Heaven.
Pleasure first succours virtue ; in return
Virtue gives pleasure an eternal reign."—
Young.

"Her (the dancing-girl's) blandishments are India's ruin. Alas ! Her smile is India's death."—*Brahmananda Kesava Chandra Sen.*

I.—THE THREE SANCTIONS.

The growth of a community, as a moral organism, is marked by three distinct stages, according as legislation, public opinion or individual conviction is recognised as the supreme sanction for conduct. In an aboriginal state, these three motives to action may remain undifferentiated. But as a community emerges into view as an organised body, with a definite course of existence, it is characterised by that "immobility," as Guizot has it, which naturally results from the Government undertaking to control the entire life of the community. The individual is aware of no duties, and moved by no desires, apart from those demanded or sanctioned by the clan or caste as a self-governing body. A constant reference is tacitly or expressly made to the wishes of the "elders"—the representatives of the conscience and the commands of the community. This is the era of tutelage. It is, however, perceived, sooner or later, by all advancing communities that, long as may be "the arm of

law," it cannot reach and adjust the inner workings of society. Man is not merely a subject but also an associate; and his relations with his neighbours are far too numerous and complex to be regulated by any government. The thousand and one occasions which bring man and man together in the daily transactions of life, must necessarily lie beyond the ken of the most watchful, and elude the grasp of the most vigorous, of administrative bodies. Thus society supplements government; and able to employ a closer surveillance and a more effective means of influence, it moulds, as no political administration can, the complete round of existence. Nothing is too commonplace and nothing too personal for its intervention. This is the era of communion. But if man is not a mere machine to be always regulated, neither is he a mere animal to be always herded. The inborn inclination to "individuality" will assert itself, despite the most strenuous efforts to hold it down. The threats of political pain or social ruin will

be ignored, at least by a select number ; at first a few and gradually several more will demand the birth-right—as an American writer suggests—of each 'soul' to have a 'vote.' A community thus enters upon an almost unlimited prospect of progress and happiness, as its members awaken to a sense of individuality—of self-regarding virtues—of self-reliance and self-denial—of self-reverence and self-consecration—of hope and service ; in a word, to the sense that man has to "absolve" himself to himself before he 'conforms' to society or 'curtsies' to Cæsar. Conformity is superseded by individuality ; convention yields place to conviction. Alike in the daring heroism of mighty crises and in the silent service of routine life, the prime concern is to do what is personally felt to be proper. This is the era of 'single manhood.'

The distinct nature and the relative merit of these three springs of action are clearly perceived when examined with reference to a few concrete instances. Le-

gislation makes the physical security and the material well-being of the nation its special charge; public opinion controls the social relations and enjoins the more patent domestic responsibilities; the sense of individuality seeks to strengthen and refine the secret motive or the innate incitement to spontaneous activity. With such materially different aims, these great agencies for the moral elevation of a society are appropriated to essentially different spheres of influence. To take a few instances from our country: legislation abolishes *sati* and enunciates the legal rights of the widow; crude public opinion, however, cripples all attempts to help the re-marriage of women; and the gloom that darkens the path of countless victims to a cruel and senseless custom can be chased away only by the illumined consciences and the enlightened sentiments of individuals. Again, legislation may fix the age of consent or restore conjugal rights; public opinion alone can discourage the silent oppression by a heart-

less husband; and only the loyal heart moved by none but chaste desires can make wedded life the altar-stair to a regenerated humanity. Legislation may raise the cost of drink and minimise the occasions for temptation; nothing save public opinion can visit the sot with the full discredit which he courts by his slavish habit; whereas a keen sense of inborn majesty is a pre-requisite to the indignation which (with Manu) brands debasing inebriety as one of the five "deadly sins." Legislation may punish immodest soliciting of attention in public; but it needs a strong public opinion to vote indecent song and suggestion out of court; while the chastity that would rather pluck out the offending right eye than tarnish its native purity, is bred only in the soul that delights in the rule of righteousness. Thus legislation judges by the act, public opinion by the behaviour, personal responsibility by the witness within of motive and desire. Legislation compels the unaided helplessness of man; public opinion works

upon his 'gregariousness' ; personal responsibility draws out his manliness.

The three stages are not perforce mutually exclusive—in time or in operation. The essential distinction between them lies not in their *when* but in their *whence* and *whither*, and not in the *acts* they approve of but in the *ends* they point to. The external aspect and the outward trend may seem to agree ; judged by what they appear to be, two lives may look much alike. Yet the laws they obey, the methods they employ and the aims they pursue may be radically different, according as the main spring is the desire to'follow the king,' to suit the times, or to be loyal to the 'royal' within oneself. Hence the product of legislation is the law-abiding man, of public opinion the well-conducted man, of personal conviction the conscientious man ; each good in his own degree—the first as he is kept from harm, the second as he is pliant to the prevailing custom, the third as he honours his conscience as his king.

Thus judged, there is a distinct scale of values—a vital difference of moral worth—in the hierarchy of rights and duties, on account of the sanction they appeal to. The activity and the authority of legislation necessarily confine themselves, for the most part, to those rights and duties which constitute what Carlyle terms "inferior criminality." Public opinion addresses itself to the one end of postponing personal taste to the general tendency. Individual responsibility, winding into the inmost springs of motive, aim and method, seeks to evolve what the same sage calls "superior morality." To this sacred class belong those personal virtues and private graces—veracity and honesty, chastity and sobriety, those eternal verities whose possession alone exalts man as the master-piece of creation. They are thus divinely ordained to the place of honour among virtues claiming our homage. Hence the importance and the authority of

II.—THE PLEA FOR SOCIAL PURITY.

Providence reveals its wisdom and mani-

fests its love in the mysterious harmonies pre-arranged between objects seemingly unrelated or opposed. This divine ordering of things is strikingly illustrated in the mysterious "fellow-feeling" created and sustained between the strong and the weak, the vigorous and the tender, the restless and the serene, the longing and the responding. The depths of those profound relations between friend and friend, parent and child, pupil and preceptor, husband and wife, what plummet of intellectual calculations can sound? They are far-reaching as Infinity, holy as Heaven. This fact makes it essential to the very existence of a nation that these sacred weldings of soul to soul should never be suffered to be loosened by lust or tinkered with baseness. Apart from all "local conditions," the intimate inter-dependence of the sexes is recognised always and everywhere. They are meant by an eternal purpose to be each other's "help-mates" in a holy task—faithful co-partners in one "present paradise," joint-trustees of the

generations to come. The profound responsibilities of parenthood, the devout self-surrenders of wedlock, the simple trusts of childhood, demand that the inviolable sanctities of marriage shall be kept scrupulously pure. "If man is the head of woman, woman is the heart of man"; and out of the heart are the issues of life. That character is the back-bone of a nation is almost a truism; but character has been compared to a bucket, and impurity to a leak at its bottom. "My strength," says Sir Galahad, "is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure." It argues a noble soul that cannot wrong a woman. A wag chafed Dryden at the utter spiritlessness of one of his heroes who could be alone with a beautiful woman and snatch no pleasure. "Yes," was the prompt and just reply, "you would have done otherwise, but you are no hero!" Gladstone has observed that "conjugal relation includes in itself all other loves;" and the Mahabharata defines the wife as "the friend in solitude, the father in duty, the mother

in distress and the refuge in wilderness." Manu demands of him that would be a father—a noble image of the great Creator—to be wholly satisfied with her he has taken unto wife, and guarantees good fortune to the house where the husband is content with the wife and the wife with the husband The Christian teacher exhorts him that would acquire a soul's companion to give up his all for her sake. This comprehensive nature of the conjugal relation necessitates a corresponding rigidity in excluding everything partial or temporary, carnal or half-hearted, in the holy alliance of two hearts—in what has been happily termed "the harvest of a hundred years." In fine, the delights of the home spring from the purity of the conjugal relation, and the strength of a nation depends on the happiness of its homes. He has no country who has no home; and he has no home who does not rejoice in it as the sanctum of chastity and the shrine of love. The plea for social purity is thus

III.—A NATIONAL PROBLEM.

If progressive communities are, according to a high authority, distinguished by their readiness to harmonise legislation with growing public ideals, it is no less true of a healthy society that its declared intentions constantly adjust themselves to what is best—purest and noblest—in individual aspiration and experience. Laws, to be beneficial, should consult the view of the cultured; public opinion, to be honoured, should echo the voice of the oracles within. In the ultimate resort, the human heart—strong because pure, happy because temperate, attractive because self-denying—is the spring of all law or custom approved of man; and the essence of righteousness is in the freedom and the directness of personal conviction. Thus viewed, social purity challenges recognition as one of those prime principles which, throned in the hearts of the "chosen ones," invariably raise the tone of society and elevate the standard of legislation. The position of woman in the home as the feeder of passion

or the first preceptress of posterity, as the neglected drudge at the hearth or the unrivalled queen of the heart, either dooms a society to the suicide of self-exhausting vice or blesses it with increasing strength and stability. National vigilance, therefore, is nowhere else more imperatively required than in demanding thorough honesty, whole-hearted sincerity, perfect gentlemanliness, in that attachment of soul to soul which, when genuine, makes man an apprentice to Heaven, but, when spurious, earns for him the prerogative of the brute. Social purity thus acquires an honoured place in that constellation of sublime virtues without whose guidance the horoscope of a nation's greatness can never be cast. "Believe me," says an authority on this subject, "the maintenance of purity in the relations of the sexes is vital to national greatness and prosperity. For in the relations of husband to wife, parent to child, through long gradations of mutual tenderness and support, each is bound to each, and all with golden chains

about the feet of God. Break once these golden links of loving help and service, and all the strong bonds of civilised society will be weakened and loosed."

Nor is our society without several dark features that compel earnest attention in this direction. The land where popular belief enhances the value of paradise with the unfading charms of celestial nymphs and offers their favours as the reward (be it only as a second choice) for the highest of religious rites; the country where the current faith often formulates itself into a most subtle or seductive class of amorous poetry, which piety does not scruple to sing and modesty does not blush to hear; the empire whose armed defenders are provided in "regimental bazaars" with markets covert for the offer of winsome flesh to licensed lust, and whose landed aristocracy often own a vulgar herd of nondescript men and women; the society infected with customs that lend the dignity of a caste to the basest of professions, or work upon the ignorance of

devotion to gratify sacredotal sensuality; the community that places no legal limits upon a man's marrying capacity, but is not unwilling to visit with the persecution of law the woman who will not yield her person where her heart is not; the nation that hurries millions through a married life they are not equal to, and thrusts on millions of others a celibacy they dare not honourably set aside—India and the Indian nation cannot, for their very name and existence in the honoured circle of the civilised, afford to omit this question from a comprehensive programme of social reform and progress. In root-principle, it is of the same stock as temperance; in main argument, it is kindred to the great problems relating to the position and function of women in home and society; in its direct aims, it touches closely the large questions of the right use of religious endowments, the great responsibilities of leaders and the proper training of the young; in its ultimate results, it has a distinct bearing upon what foreign travel is meant to achieve or the

elevation of the lower classes is expected to accomplish.

IV.—What is Social Purity?

Man is the crown of creation even from the matchless complexity (with the immense possibilities) of his nature. There is, no doubt, a charm in simplicity, just as there is music in a monochord. But that harmony in which, according to the poet, this universal frame began and to which it has been growing, has its soul in well-ordered complexity. We are told, in the name of evolution, that the human embryo races through a range of diversified growth which in prehuman periods took ages to accomplish; and it needs no great stretch of imagination to see that the body, which is the focussed result of a hundred scattered processes of development, enshrines a being that commands a myriad avenues to mental and moral progress. This distinguishing capacity of man makes sound character a highly complex instrument, capable of producing angelic symphony but easily liable to get out of tune.

The sole remedy lies in that serenity which presupposes equal growth on all sides, that purity which points the way to perfection, that cleanliness of heart which is next to godliness of soul. Purity is to character what symmetry is to beauty—not an accident of adornment, but an essential of structure. It denotes that apt assortment of man's desires and appetites, in deference to his special powers and faculties of thought and speech, emotion and arts, will and work, which, by subordinating the physical to the intellectual, postponing the immediate to the ultimate, and surrendering the pleasing for the good, combines in man the sacred functions of the heir of ages past and the architect of centuries to come. It consists in that uniformity of development–that moving forward of the whole man, to which alone is awarded the maximum of good. It is that conservation of vital energy which comes of a wise correlation of vital forces. It is that discipline of the heart under which man's desires and powers are told

off to their respective tasks and through their conjoint watch and work win the great victories of life. In fine, it is that attuning of the soul to the processes of nature as the chosen purposes of God, which ought to make every man what only an occasional sage now is—the interpreter of life in the terms of eternity and the beautifier of earth as the corridor of Heaven. Applied to social life, purity is complete submission, whole-hearted homage, soul-deep obeisance, to what the sublimest English poet has named "the sun-clad power of chastity." It is a call to the spouse to rejoice in the spouse, and a command to the parent to be pure amidst pleasure. It is a recognition of the stern truth that the righteousness which exalteth a nation has its secret strength in 'a well-governed and wise appetite,' regulated by the 'holy dictate of spare temperance.' It is a caution to the community that 'to hastening ills a prey' is the land where the heat of passion is preferred to the warmth of love, and the

'prompture of blood' is followed as the law of life. It holds (with Manu) that culpable attention to anothers' consort is the surest course to curtail one's length of days; and it condemns (with Shakespeare) as comrades in iniquity the rake and the murderer—"the saucy sweetness that coins heaven's image on stamps that are forbid" and the reckless villainy that "falsely takes away a life true made." It declares that the happiness of marriage shall be earned only with the obligations of marriage, and the blessings of family life shall be the prize only of those who keep its irrevocable pledge. It declares human existence too sacred to be cradled in lust; it proclaims the marriage bond too strong to be dissolved by freaks of taste, defects of law, or even the transition of death. It honours holy wedlock as an ordinance of the Most High and, hence, insists on the untarnished sanctity (to adopt F. Harrison's happy language), from even "one passing shadow of suspicion," of "the inviolable institution whereon the happi-

ness of all depends." It finally warns the creature that "hooks its right and wrong to the appetite" to beware and be not deluded, that "neither the sensual nor the drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

A very thoughtful and charming writer has pointed out that the benevolent nature of the government of this world is strikingly evinced in the boundless bounty with which gratification is added to relief, pleasure is attached to duty, and enjoyment is infused into necessity. Thus, while light and sound might have sufficed for ordinary life, wisdom and love mellow the one into music and the other into rainbow. Hunger might be met with food, but a relish is placed in the palate; and touch is endowed with not only the sensitiveness of a thermometer but also the living sympathies of a flower. Life is thus everywhere waited on by pleasure; but it constitutes all the difference between the animal and the man how pleasure is used. To pursue pleasure as the purpose of

life is the animal; to subdue pleasure to the purpose of life is the man. That follows the lead of instinct, this guides instinct with reason. Thus the animal is the creature of the day; but man is the pilgrim of eternity. This distinguishing prerogative makes, in man's case, pleasure the hand-maid to progress—not an alien to be rejected, but a servant to be managed; not a disease to be rooted out, but an impulse to be regulated. "Temperance"—wise moderation in the legitimate, cheerful abstinence from the forbidden—is, accordingly, the only law befitting man; and purity is temperance in that supreme relation of the sexes which, as ordering the joys of home, prescribing the ideals of society and linking generation to generation, sways the destinies of our race.* Thus social purity is the

* "Surely a day is coming when it will be known again what virtue is in purity and continence of life; how high, beneficent, sternly inexorable is the duty laid on every creature in regard to these particulars. Well, if such a day never come, then I perceive much else will never come. Magnanimity and depth of insight will never come; heroic purity of heart and of eye; noble pious valour to amend us and the age of bronze and lacquers, how can they ever come?"—*Carlyle.*

control of our appetites by our higher faculties as a course of life the most favourable to complete growth. "There is," says a vigorous writer on this subject, "a dignity conferred upon us—bringing men near to the high and solemn relationship of the Creator"—in our possession of the power of reproduction. With this honor is reposed the responsibility on every man to be pure and worthy in life and sentiment—in act, speech and thought. Social purity is chastity in body and chastity in spirit—stern, uncompromising repugnance to whatever is base or vulgar, indecent or immodest, in work or pleasure, speech or song, thought or sentiment, belief or life—stout, unrelenting opposition, despite the threat of law or the frown of society, the curse of pretentious piety or the loss of spurious attachment, to every rule or habit, practice or institution that defeats, or tends to defeat, the high purpose of human life by gilding shame with fashion or condoning carnal longing as venial. It brands as mean and cowardly,

notwithstanding mimic nobility and affected bravery, the man who uses the frailty of the weak or the want of the needy for his own base purpose, who haunts beauty till it is tarnished or pursues innocence till it is vitiated, who repays friendship with infidelity, or affects piety to pollute all the more securely. It demurs to the law, though backed by power, that declines to shield the helpless from the ravage of the brutal or to screen the guileless from the craft of the wily. It decries the customs that invite undisguised shame to the hall of honour, or restore convicted impurity to the place of position. It silences the song that deifies the brute and proscribes the picture that perpetuates the immodest. It shuns the book that feeds the budding mind with "the sewage of the slum," and rebukes the speech that glorifies "our swine enjoyments." It loathes the longings "that fancy begets on youthful thoughts," and detests the desires that delight to wallow in "troughs of Zolaism." It stifles the

taste that tinctures the soul with the taints of hell, and contemns the creed that caters to the carnal and calls it piety. On the other hand, it esteems the life that does not deviate into guilty pleasure, and honors him as a hero who ever guards the citadel of his senses. It upholds the law that vindicates morality, and espouses the custom that conforms to righteousness. It enjoys the speech that wells up from a clean heart, and appreciates the mood that contemplates the sublime. It values the song that softens the savage in man, and prizes the art that sublimates the pure. It cherishes the sentiment that aspires after the True, and lives by the faith that adores the All-Holy.* In a word, it consecrates the entire life, from the cradle of childhood to the 'skyey tent' of sagehood, unto the hastening of that 'far-off divine event' when man and woman, through their hallowed union, will achieve the glory of a God-illumined self—that sovereign

* See the specimen "Purity Pledges" at the end.

power (in Tennyson's thrice-happy words) which consists in self-controlling strength and self-knowing wisdom, in self-denying goodness and self-reverencing holiness.

This sacred end kept in view makes marriage the most hallowed of sacraments, though all the same the freest of choices—that solemn affiance of heart unto heart and that holy covenant of soul with soul, to force which is the lowest slavery, and to avoid which is the basest selfishness. To enquire how marriage originated is outside the scope of this paper. It suffices for the present purpose to point out that true national progress has everywhere proceeded parallel to an increasing sense of the sacredness of the family bond. So far as it can be traced, the march of mankind along the heights of civilisation has been in the direction of "constitutional monarchy" as the strongest bulwark of the state, and of "legalised monogamy" as the firmest foundation of the home. But monogamy, like monotheism, largely fails in its results when in-

herited as time-honored tradition or assumed as extraneous conformity. Thus monogamy may degenerate into what has heartlessly been travestied as "one to one being cursedly confined," as mono-theism may point only to a cold eternal something or an abstract reign of law. But elevated to supreme rule over the whole sphere of life, this "maiden passion for a maid" is the bountiful dispenser of "all that makes a man." In this "single love," as Ruskin has it, "is the sanctification of all man's strength, and the continuance of all his purposes." The true test of monogamy is the monocracy over the whole heart of the one all-endearing, even as the true mark of monotheism is the monolatry, with the whole soul, of the One All-sufficient. The essence of both is the complete devotion of one to the one; in both it is alone with the alone.

"O! there is something in marriage, like
the veil of the temple of old,
That screened the Holy of holies with
blue and purple and gold!

Something that makes a chamber, where
only the one may come,
A sacredness, too, and a silence, where
joy that is deepest is dumb."

And social purity seeks to guard the sacredness of this 'chamber' with a vigilance and a devotion too wakeful for the sliest insinuation and too firm for the hardest temptation, and to adorn and enrich it with the most endearing affection of the heart and the most sublime devotion of the soul.

V.—SOME PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF SOCIAL PURITY

may next be glanced at, with special reference to our social conditions. A word of caution and of request may here be necessary that, as one descends from fine principles to unpleasant particulars, one runs the risk of offending "ears polite." But the duty of speaking an unwelcome truth, according to occasion, being granted, the kind reader's judgment may decide whether the occasion does not exist. The first, then, of these particular aspects is

(a) Religion and Social Purity.

The intensest devotional attitude towards God is that sweet ecstasy—that enchanting *madhuryam*—in which He is "the Spouse Divine of human soul." It is a conception at once direct, attractive and inspiring : not distant awe, indefinite familiarity or dependant trust, but voluntary and cheerful self-dedication. This master-passion of the soul naturally figures itself forth in a thousand suggestive symbols or allegories. But there are two distinct stages in a complete religious career—the detachment of the spirit from matter and the infusion of the spirit into matter; the retirement into the wilderness to perform the self-subduing fast, the return into the world to preside at the self-realising feast; the discipline of rigid abstinence from the world's revelries, the franchise of free participation in the world's charities. In the first, religion is the noviciate under the austere rule of morality; in the second, religion is the vision on the mountain-top receiving a divine decalogue for the multi-

tude below. The former is the period of discipleship, the latter the period of kinship to God. But when this order is violated, as it often must be in a country where "faith" is in so many instances divorced from "light," the liberties of the later are anticipated as the licenses of the earlier stage, the counters of mature wisdom pass as the coin of green ignorance, and the ecstasies of the soul are perverted into the indulgences of the sense. Thus it comes of a huge unsettling of matters spiritual that many a custom or institution has arisen in our midst, whose sole justification is that it is associated with the great name of religion and shall not be questioned. But who can prevent the little infection from doing its work? The so-called faith of the majority has not only been stereotyped into a "zodiac of feasts and fasts" but also degenerated in not a few instances into pomp and performances far from elevating, if not positively offensive. Occasions there be when inebriated enthusiasm, not content with bathing and feeding, bedding

and wedding "the Lord of the Universe," plans for him a nocturnal adventure from which he is supposed to return *incognito* before dawn; or when unbridled eagerness, toiling to scale the heights of Indra's blissful abode, not only marks its progress with holocausts of dumb victims but terminates in a deed of sanctimonious sin that no system of morality dare justify. Celibacy, that self-forgetfulnes in the service of the Lord, degenerates into a social fiction, till a vestal *deva-dasi* is replaced by a shame-proof *demi-monde*, * and

* "Our temples cannot improve unless the dancing girl be first kicked out," was the remark made by the Hon'ble Mr. P. Ananda Charlu, when the present writer happened once to travel with him. As an interesting experiment, it may be mentioned that a friend of the writer's, who is the manager of an important temple in the Northern Circars, "disallowed dancing girls about four years ago," and he states that "no want was felt at any time in the real worship and temple service on account of their absence," that it "does not show any change for the worse," and that "a great majorty of the devotees feel it a change for the better, although here are a few vulgarly people that complain of it."

sacerdotal vows betray their hollowness now in nude photos, then in criminal prodigality, anon in the incarceration of a holy priest for gallantry, and again in the exposure in a court of law of the life-history of a "born-lord" of countless devotees with particulars revolting enough for a foreigner to characterise the sorry individual as a creature not fit to be touched 'with a pair of hot tongs.' Devotion, that rejoicing of the soul in the graces of the Lord, degenerates into vulgar vagaries that embody themselves in images and pictures of ruthless realism with dissolute details, and express themselves in song or verse that purblind partisans alone can misname piety. Esotericism, that panacea for all the spiritual ailments of India, would fain galvanise these dead bones into life; but while the subtle apologist points to a mystic inside—a light behind Parrhasius's curtain, the simple world adopts the pleading to justify the palpable outside, and offensive orgies and voluptuous *leelas*, amorous ditties and "unholy *holis*" (as

some one has termed them) stand out among the main features of the religious occupations of the majority. Nor does the evil stop there. This culpable indifference to the essentials of morality in the most absorbing concerns of life robs religion, oftentimes, of even ordinary solemnity and reverence; and not a few of the localities credited with the odour of sanctity need only a closer examination to be found to stink with impurity. Deplorable as this state of things is, it is not beyond human help. The remedy lies with the community; which, outside the callousness of custom, is uncommonly sensitive in such matters. Let only men of light and leading look facts square in the face, let them enforce "morals" before they sanction "symbols" and insist on sterling character as the first proof of pious conviction; and the Augean stables will yet be cleansed. In our national ideals and traditions there is enough of chaste piety and inspiring purity to justify the hope that, if only this outer "abasement" could

be swept away and the native grandeur revealed to the people's heart, our nation, too, may realise and appreciate the sublime truth that piety without purity is grosser than rank superstition—it is sanctified sin. But it is one thing to hold out indiscriminately on our past greatness; it is another to emulate it judiciously. The next topic that may engage attention is

(b)Public recognition of social impurity.

in any form and with any excuse. Ruskin has taught us that the acme of goodness is not merely to do the right thing but also to love it and to enjoy it. The reverse is equally true that virtue fails of its essence, if abstinence from vice does not amount to a total refusal to lend countenance to it to any degree and under any circumstances. To pity and pass by the weakness that hides itself in the shade may be charity; to mark impurity as an unfortunate element in some lives and bind it down with restraints and penalties calculated to confine it to its natural place as the grossest of indulgences —the last and the

lowest of "deadly sins," may be statesmanship; to devise means and employ agencies to warn the unsuspecting or to reclaim the erring, may be philanthropy; but to trim immorality with fashion, to furnish it with facility, to countenance it with an apology, to provide it with a passport, or to charter it with a custom, is to set a premium on vice and to condemn the state or the society as "organised selfishness." A state or a society is not bound to procure for the carnal cravings of the sensual any more than to provide for the gambling tendencies or the thieving propensities of the avaricious. On the other hand, nations or communities are no less amenable than individuals to the ethical law that not to rebuke or protest against open vice is to half sanction it. The government that undertakes to protect base gratification from natural sting or merited stigma, incurs the heavy responsibility of furthering vice by making impurity venial. As Mrs. Josephine Butler has pointed out, state regulation of vice is

but state sanction of vice; it is only "drilling, barracking and licensing vice" — procuring 'state-accredited instruments' for the most debasing use. Likewise, the society that assigns in its fold a recognised place and a decent position to professional lewdness —aye, confers on it the dignity of a caste and tricks it out with a 'catching' name, condemns itself as "procuress to hell." The future of a nation depends wholly upon its estimate of man —its hope of human possibilities; and the community that counts social impurity, not a temporary failing to be strenuously overcome, but a lasting frailty to be reduced to a custom, looks down upon man as an "appetite incarnate." Says an eminent medical authority, "As soon prescribe theft or lying or anything else that God has forbidden as prescribe inchastity;"* and what is public recogni-

* The opinions of two other eminent medical men may be cited here. According to one of them, "there are no organs so much under control as those of generation. Their qualities peculiarly adapt them to subserviency to man's moral nature." The other observes, "No man

tion given to social impurity by state or by society but this culpable prescription of inchastity? Closely related to this subject is the rather exciting question of

(*c*) *Social Purity and Public Life.*

If, as Carlyle holds, "society everywhere is some representation of a graduated worship of heroes," the life of a leader is a model to contemporaries and a heritage to posterity. That life embodies the moral ideal to be imitated by a thousand admirers; it maps out the moral path to be trodden by a thousand followers. When one of England's wisest politicians laid down that he who would be a statesman must first prove himself a gentleman, the demand really meant that the aspiration to be honoured with public confidence implied the covenant to be clean and pure beyond every insinuation, above every suspicion. If, as Lecky states, "pure domestic life" is amongst the 'strongest'

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ever yet was in the slightest degree or way the worse for perfect continence, or the better for incontinence."

of those forces that bear a nation onward to improvement, the private life of one that would mould the thoughts, guide the energies and thus shape the destinies of a nation is a public concern. Let it be once conceded that there is good ground for the many moral restraints which a wise government imposes on its public servants; and it will be idle to contend that those who would prescribe the career of a nation need not rise to the standard of those who should manage its passing concerns, or that the integrity enforced about "barbaric pearl and gold" may be safely relaxed concerning what is the most precious jewel of woman and the dearest possession of man. Both may be private as single incidents; but both are public as examples or precedents. In both, the weakness of the few becomes the excuse of the many. In both, the purpose of life is vitiated and the ideal of life is lowered. As Milton very truly points out, it implies a certain lack of manly greatness—a weak mind that "aims not beyond a higher

design"than mere pleasure—to succumb to amorous charms. Inchastity, as Mohammad warns us, is not merely an evil course but a foul thing. Does it not, further, sound as mere mockery that the call to fairness and equity should come from one who did not scruple to despoil a woman of her birth-right or a home of its happiness, or who did not hesitate to snatch a selfish gratification which, in one respect, is blacker than a cold-blooded murder, as invariably implicating the peace or the hope of an accomplice? Concupiscence, no less than cupidity, is incompatible with greatness— with real integrity and broad catholicity; and to ignore this fact is to drop half our kind out of account. Quite unavailing is the defence which compares the disinterested leader of a nation's hope and activities to an agent that knows no higher motive than money—a lawyer, a doctor or an engineer. It is a sign of diseased enthusiasm, if not a mark of the rather low notion prevailing about apparently

high objects of life, that one who surrenders comfort and position and accepts loss and reproach for a humble or neglected cause, is placed by his professed supporters under the same vinculum with the skilled workman ever available to the party that "pays." Unless discipleship deteriorate into what Carlyle stigmatises as 'spaniel-ship,' it cannot be true that he who may be the sorriest or the most indifferent of mortals and he who fears the Lord and walks in the light of His wisdom are alike fitted to marshal the energies and forecast the future of a nation. The former is "a soldier of fortune" whose cleverness any one may buy; the latter, "a guide, philosopher and friend" entitled to our profoundest respect and, on that very account, bound to satisfy our highest expectations in social virtues. He is a 'Representative Man' whom wisdom and gratitude alike would decline to measure with the mercenary standard of a paid pilot; and to demand this personal purity in one thus exalted is but a fresh instance

of the ancient truth that he who will control shall begin with self-control, that he who will rule without shall not be subject to anarchy within. Not a few of the supporters of this cause may advantageously

(*d*) *work among the children and the youth* of the land. Apart from the nature of the public education now in vogue in India, much too little, notoriously little, is being done to build up character–to foster noble virtues and create high aspirations–in the generations-to-be. It is, indeed, agreeably surprising that where such scanty attention is given to the healthy rearing-up of children, the tone of general morality is, nevertheless, so satisfactory. That betokens the innate goodness of human nature and the intrinsic worth of some of the principles, now hardened into customs, which were the original moulds of our national life. But the painful experience of every one that has endeavoured to be of some public service almost invariably reports that,

for a large and civilised nation, most disappointingly few are the instances in which our countrymen dare rise above what may be called "neighbourly goodness." A chivalric spirit (if that term be expressive enough) is notably wanting among us. It is not mere altruism; it is, so to speak, social transcendentalism. This national drawback early evinces itself in our youth. Our boys may be rightly credited with being more docile and better-behaved than their western brethren; but are they not also more 'tortuous' in their ways—more wanting in 'directness'?* Does not a tendency to "look about," when they ought to "look in the face," early sprout up in them? One chief reason for this defect is the position of women in India—not, as is generally said, low or hard, but rather uninspiring, somewhat deficient in the capacity to evolve in man that

* A careful and sympathetic European observer of our nation has remarked that India produces neither so many rogues nor so many heroes as a country in the West does.

refined gentleness which, without weakening the vigour, strains out the coarseness. Brought up under such "home influences," our youth betray either precocious vulgarity in the lower classes, or "studied" bashfulness (young Marlow-like) in the higher classes, of society. Either way there is the absence of 'naturalness;' which to a large extent accounts for the one peculiar characteristic, almost national, of so many of our homes; which, again, are not impure or unhappy, but uninvigorating. Work among our boys and youth, not expressly educational, has, therefore, to be directed towards evoking this *verve*—this instinctive fairness and natural fineness–in them. Not that efforts bearing directly on our question of social purity are quite superfluous. If the experience of teachers, watchful and themselves good, counts for aught, and if the painful tale often told by doctors of all denominations be even partially true, there are quite too many instances, often leading to grave consequences and at

times ending even fatally, of the early tasting of the forbidden fruit;* and what better can be expected in a country where so few feel the duty of placing a check upon their tongues or their tastes for their dear ones' sake, and where painted Jezebels are permitted to jaunt in the most respectable localities, at times in the very neighbourhood of educational institutions? But the main effort has to be directed to preventative rather than to remedial work—to forearm the youth against coming dangers rather than to snatch them from present evils. What our community needs is the formation of associations, on the lines of 'the guilds of honour' in the west, with membership large enough for fraternity but quite within bounds for discipline, worked in a fostering spirit by persons that have a sacred sense of the promise and the

* Alarming particularly are the accounts given by several medical men of "that hideous sin, engendered by vice and practised in solitude" by a large number of students and other young men. It is to be hoped that the type of hotels and "eating-houses" from which nefarious stories come out occasionally, like blasts from hell, is fast becoming obsolete.

possibility of childhood or youth, and inculcating, on broad principles and in devout reverence, along with spotless purity the kindred virtues of unflinching honesty and large-hearted magnanimity. This will necessarily be slow work but, in the fulness of God's time, sure. It is true that there are already many institutions in the land, professing to promote this very end; but the question has to be boldly asked and honestly answered whether their strong point is ethics or athletics—be the latter lingual or physical. A fair begining must be made; and, if anywhere, it is in this work that men are superior to methods. Every life lived under the Great Task-Master's eye is of account here.—As the last of these particular aspects of the question may be considered the movement in which so much of the attention and interest of the friends of this reform has, for obvious reasons, been for sometime centering—

(e) the Anti-Nautch Movement.

It was, perhaps, unfortunate, though evidently unavoidable as a beginning,

that the purity movement was started in the concrete form of the anti-nautch agitation. Friends ready to further the cause failed, in many instances, to realise the basal principle; while persons startled by its novelty put upon it most fantastic constructions. One party traced it to a lurking hatred for the dancing-girl; another discovered in it a crusade aginst music; to some it appeared to be a graceless exposure of a small national weakness; to some others it was nothing better than a quixotic attempt to cure the irremediable. Even among friends but few realised that to discourage nautch was to demand purity in other respects, and to decline to employ the dancing-girl's entertainment was to disapprove open impurity wherever found. When, therefore, a seemingly superfluous memorial to a distant government disclosed a personal promise "to do likewise," enthusiasm cooled down and eloquence was hushed in not a few cases. When, next, it gradually came out that to condemn the nautch was to covenant

for an earnest endeavour after purity in thought, speech and act, many more shrank from so exacting a demand. When, at a later stage, the principle which would proscribe polluted pleasure was sought to be applied to public life, some of even those that had been the most forward to urge the attack were also among the foremost to sound the retreat. But the anti-nautch movement would be a huge cry for a trifle, almost a 'much ado about nothing' — unless it presented itself as an integral factor of a larger endeavour, a particular application of a comprehensive principle, a concrete illustration of a lofty though seemingly new-born ideal. Its basis is not in fine manners, but in good morals; its aim is not mere elegant breeding, but pure living. If every one espousing this cause has not realised this high expectation, it is not the fault of the principle. Many are called but few are chosen.

Among the several countries with which India would wish to compete in morals

and in civilisation there is not one that accords to open flagrant impurity such recognition as this country gives to the 'nautch-girl.' Veiled vice and secret inchastity are to be found all the world over; but sexual immorality as a hereditary and acknowleged profession, living in peace and amity with and amidst other avocations, fortified against the attacks of time or change, and endowed with the privileges of social sanction, is special to this land. By no other civilised people is the thin mask of music, as a profession, suffered so fully to cover (and, for all social purposes, so completely to atone for) the iniquity of a woman openly living a "fast life." In the temple she has not only the free and ready admission of any other lay person, but, in innumerable cases, a position next only to that of the priest or the manager. No part of a town is too respectable for her residence; no circle of society, too high for her invitation. No festive function, civic or social, is too solemn for her presence: to receive a guest or

to felicitate a friend, to welcome a superior or to celebrate a jubilee, to solemnise a wedding or to initiate a child into learning—aye, at times, to reverence a spiritual head or to honor a religious reviver, her song is the *te deum* of thankfulness, her dance the exhilaration of enthusiasm. The benediction at many an auspicious ceremony is of her chanting; the longevity of connubial life for many a hopeful bride is secured through the talismanic "black beads" of her stringing. In "temple processions" hers is the lead, while the graceless priest with his unheeded jargon is exiled to a safe distance.* Famine-stricken parents, albeit of high caste, may surrender to her custody and profession a child that a foreigner, however pure and respectable, may not apply for. In times of "legal" difficulties she may count upon the support of even some of the titled lead-

*May it be reasonably hoped that the days are wholly gone when the carriages of the *elite* were her 'free conveyance,' and the wives of the fashionable were her "honorary maids"?

ers of society privately to plead with the crude, stickling judge to do a little wrong so as to achieve a great right. But how this has come to be so and why this is thus endured in a country otherwise jealous of female chastity, it is not difficult to see. Of all the harmful consequences of the caste system none would seem to be so injurious as its tendency to place merit and demerit on a level. Both being made customary, virtue is not necessarily honoured with social credit and vice is not perforce branded with social discredit. Not what is good but what is usual, is commendable; likewise, not what is bad but what is unusual, is condemnable. The national conscience is, in many important matters, hide-bound with custom. Hence the ruthless, sometimes savage, punishment of chance instances of secret vice, alongside of this disgusting indifference—nay, this culpable encouragement given socially through the *nautch* and religiously through temple-service—to innumer-

able cases* of open shamelessness.

That these women have not always been thus patronised, is evident from ancient literature. They seem to have begun as virgins dedicated to the service of religion—vestals that forgot the world in the thoughts of Heaven. They were consecrated to the Lord; and to that age belongs the awful warning that to approach one of that class sexually was more sinful than thus to approach even one's mother. It is of that by-gone period those well-meaning friends of India really think who defend the modern nautch-girl by unfairly comparing her to the mediæval nun! However, nothing is so frequently, though in most cases so imperfectly, imitated as religion; and the spontaneous self-forgetfulness of the early generations became

*The exact number of these unfortunate women in India cannot be ascertained. According to the Census of 1891, those following "indefinite and disreputable occupations" were returned as 15,62,981, and actors, singers' dancers and their accompanists numbered 2,70,956. Probably, several appeared under the respectable heading of 'temple-servants.'

the forced asceticism of those who came after them. The institution would appear to have been in a transitional stage—not perhaps a caste, but not without a deep touch of the world—at the time of Buddha; who had an enthusiastic admirer in Ambapali, who could vie with great lords in position and opulence. With that mighty emphasis laid upon a pure life which distinguished Buddhism, the women of light song and dance necessarily went down in *status*. In the days "of the Chinese pilgrims the singer and the courtesan were compelled to reside outside the village-walls, along with the fisherman and the scavenger." * History, however, "seems to indicate that she was not kept out long;"*and as that wave of moral force which is associated with the name of Buddha ebbed away, she could, by the age of the dramas, regain through her charms and accomplishments the social position no longer merited by her life. As in course of centuries custom favoured by conveni-

* Census of India, 1891—General Report, p. 110.

ence fossilised every profession into a caste, that encyclopædic organisation—the Hindu Society, with its round-robin of castes—could accommodate professional lewdness with a plea and a place, just as it furnished the professional thief with a guide-book and a presiding-genius. What comes by birth-right need not be earned by accomplishments; and "the general notion," as the Census Commissioner observes, "of their employment (at present) is that expressed in one of the schedules from a town in the north as *singing and enjoying sensual pleasures*!" Such have been the high origin and the low fall of a most unfortunate section of mother India's daughters; who (in the words of Prof. Sir W. Monier Williams) were once "patterns of piety and propriety," but are now "slaves to the licentious passions of the profligate." Is not society bound to help them up to a pure course of life? "How is it," asks that eminent temperance-preacher and noble friend of India, the Rev. T. Evans, "that the temple

Priests and sacred Brahmins do not step to the front to reform such a degrading abuse as this?" But the question is really an appeal to the heart and the conscience of entire educated India.

Custom, however hoary or wide-spread, though it may at times have a tempering effect, cannot make evil quite harmless; and far from light is the penalty that India has, silently and almost unconsciously, been paying for suffering this dark iniquity to live and thrive in her very bosom. Public recognition, by hiding the ugliness of a vice, makes it fashionable and thus costly. It sets up a competition where repugnance should be the only attitude. How prodigal in wealth and life this injurious indulgence has been, scores of impoverished families and hundreds of frustrated hopes, countless instances of disappointed careers, wasted opportunities, neglected affections and squandered fortunes, can amply testify. Further, the desire for repentance is generally proportionate to the social odium attaching

to a sin. "That would be a reproach to your mother; you only name me," was the proud retort of a smart dancing-girl to a filthy epithet cast at her by the voluptuous Sirajuddoula. What is labelled as a necessary profession by society, is rarely felt to be a degrading occupation; and the consoling thought that one need not be better than is expected of one, easily satisfies the casual compunction. That "want-begotten rest" which the poet rates lower than the worst bondage, is the doom of the unfortunate nursling of sin who is never made to feel that her tainted life marks her off as a moral leper. Thus the gate of repentance, open in Heaven's grace to the vilest sinner, is virtually closed by a custom-ridden community that thereby makes itself an abettor of impenitent guilt. How many a Kanchanamali that would repent and seek the ways of the Lord, is being thus lulled into suicidal security by a society that thoughtlessly cries "Peace! Peace!" when there is no peace!"—Again, nothing can justify the

pleasure purchased with another's degradation. Be the fictitious theory what it may, in real practice no female is—no female can by custom be—a musician in calling unless she also be a 'public woman' in life. It is her fallen condition that makes her eligible for that profession. Those who hastily compare her to the music-hall singer of the west, besides implying that two blacks make a white, decide the question on the ground of mere decency, forgetting that a 'fast life' is there an unacknowledged and incidental weakness, but here an avowed and necessary pre-requisite. If Manu is justified in charging with destruction of life him who cooks the meat or him who eats it, no less than him who kills the sheep, does not the guilt or the shame of the dancing-girl's life fall to the account of those who accept her 'fallen' condition as the passport to her profession as a singer or dancer?—Moreover, music, that divine art which "stoopeth so low as to soften brute beasts, yet mounteth as high as angels,"

that "inarticulate, unfathomable speech which leads us to the edge of the infinite and lets us for a moment gaze into that," that food of love and that incense of the soul, has been largely neglected and completely disreputed by its unholy association with open immorality. Times were when sages did not decline to teach it and princesses did not disdain to learn it. Numerous instances could be cited of ladies of virtue and position acquiring and using this noble accomplishment. They felt no indignity, the public imputed no flaw, on that account.† But when society was unhinged by political disturbance and social deterioration, modesty retired, while impudence held the field undisputed. With the return of peace and enlightenment, music should have been everywhere restored to its ancient prestige of an honourable accomplishment. But the

† Mr. Besant is reported to have observed recently: "Music has been excluded (from the education of girls) because of its shameful associations with the *nautch-girl*. Your sons, if they want music, have to mix with the most shameful of characters."

force of association has fastened a tarnished name to it; and so long as it is condemned to be the prerogative of the Circes and the Syrens of our society (and it must be so till we decline to be charmed by the murky music of a maudlin), it must be content to be the bond-maid of iniquity, the stalking-horse for impurity to prey all the more securely. Lastly, sullying, degrading, debasing must be the effect upon all—home and neighbourhood, wife and children, guests and friends—of an entertainment in which, pretending to no secrecy and mindful of no modesty, she who, of all womankind, is the only one to take a hire for her 'person', she who has forfeited the sweet name of sister, she who is nor maid nor wife nor widow, she whose "heart is snares and nets" and whose "house is the way to hell," simulates a virtue she daily desecrates, or pleads for a pleasure she daily pollutes. To touch pitch and not be tarred, is to dream of repealing an eternal ethical law. The weighty words of the learned and venerable Dr.

Bhandarkar will suffice: "I have always been of the opinion that he who patronises dancing-girls does not sufficiently hate the immoral life which they professedly lead, or value as highly as he ought to do female purity, which is the soil on which the noble qualities of women grow. The institution of nautch cannot but have a debasing effect on the morality of men and women. I shall not, without strong proof, believe in a man's being a faithful husband, if he takes delight in giving nautch-parties and attending them. To have a nautch at one's own house is to give an object-lesson in immorality to the boys and the girls in the family, especially to the former. As long as nautch is fashionable among us and is freely indulged in, it is impossible that the morality of men should greatly improve, and our respect for women should increase." Wise words these that put the matter in a nutshell. With them, not inappropriately, may go Bishop Welldon's thoughtful observation that "the cause of morality in India would

seem to make a definite advance, if at the beginning of the new century the officials of government and the leaders of society were to make known their desire that *nautches* should not form part of any entertainment to which they.....are invited."

Not many words can profitably be given to the question, 'what next?' when nautches have been universally discouraged. It is not easy or safe to foretell the direction likely to be taken by the energies of a society passing through a great transition. To the strictly pure the simple consideration, "morals before art or pleasure," would be quite enough; but it is, probably, too much to expect the majority to be fully content with that rule. There must be a sense of want for a time, as the old order changeth into the new. Promiscuous musical entertainments, barren of result in other countries, would grow obsolete. What with natural unsuitability to India and what with social discouragement, dance would lapse as a relic of the past. Weaned from its present low

associations, music would become a commoner and more respectable acquirement—a profession with some and an accomplishment with many; and all the genuine pleasure to be derived from that noble art might, after a generation or two, be fully regained. Indian music, rich in devotional and unfortunately pretty full in amorous element, would have to be considerably improved on the purely social side. Social gatherings—not the current picture-galleries, but cordial, convivial assemblies—would become frequenter and more useful and attractive, with the spread of education and of liberal ideas regarding "castes" and the "position of women." Clubs—not the present-day 'aftermaths' of professional work, but resorts of learned ease and friendly communion—would be more popular as interest and information about "general subjects" should grow. A dozen other methods of employing leisure in useful and innocent ways would gradually suggest themselves, should there be only a firm resolution "not to drink poison,

if nectar be not within easy reach." As to the particular community concerned; when deprived of the prestige of music, its hope will lie chiefly in two healthy changes:-(1)the allotment of temple-service (of course, wholly for sacred purposes) as the accompaniment only of chastity, married life being no disqualification; and (2) the education and improvement of the male members of the community--now mostly drones or parasites. No doubt, with many an unhappy woman the change will for a time be a "vision of Mirza" bridge, through which she will drop into the gulf below. But should the present wealth and influence of the community be wisely utilised, the meed of immorality might happily serve as the price of redemption. A caste, chartered to a vicious life, would cease to be; and though some frail creatures might deplorably go astray, not a few of the daughters now heedlessly prodigal would be restored to the longing bosom of the Divine Mother.

VI.—CONCLUSION.

That 'born prince' among the educated sons of India, that noble soul, the news of whose translation to 'holier heights' has just been received in such 'divine despair' by the whole nation, observed at the last Madras Social Conference (1898) that the best test of the wholesomeness of the principles of social reform was to picture them to the mind as "writ large" on the society and to realise what happy changes would thus be made, and what abiding good would thus be wrought. Judged according to this wise canon, purity in personal, domestic and social life commends itself as the very key-stone of moral strength and national greatness. "Trample on woman," says a distinguished friend of this cause, "and you trample on your own moral nature. Respect woman, care for her, work for her, give her knightly shelter and protection, and you shall find the loftier emotions gaining sway in your heart, and touching your life to finer issues." "Whether you be young or

old, think, I pray you, of the holy names of sister, (daughter,) wife and mother; think of all the holy influences which stream forth upon an evil world from the relations which those sacred names represent, and resolve, one and all, that under no sky from which the sun shines down shall those names have a holier, tenderer meaning than in this fair land."

Nor need this inspiring appeal come amiss to a people with rich traditions and noble examples of social purity in the past. The crowning merit of our national hero was that he never shot but one arrow and never loved but one woman, the *Kohinoor* of her kind. Our national pattern of truthfulness preferred gifting away an empire to plucking the rose from a maiden brow. Our national model of devotion made purity the basis of piety by beholding a "mother" in every "stranger woman." The greatest of our epics tells man "to look upon his neighbour's wife as on her that gave him life." The oldest of our bridal hymns exhorts the couple be-

ing wedded to pray jointly, "May all the gods that live above blend our hearts in love!" The true ideal of chivalry in India made the 'knight' the *rakhiband-bhai* —the bracelet- wearing brother— of the 'lady.' An ancient Indian conception of the Deity is that of 'half-man and half-woman,' the Harmoniser of the sexes. A hoary precept of purity in our literature charges every person to honour the body and to keep it pure, for it is the abode of the spirit. May the sanctity of that Indian sage abide in us who, when a celestial nymph visited his hermitage, employed her blandishments to disturb his penances, and immodestly laid bare her 'mysterious charms,' exclaimed in childlike innocence, "Would that one could have a *mother* of such beauty!" The grace of the All-Holy be with us all !

APPENDIX.

(SPECIMEN PLEDGES.)

A. For Adults.

With the help of God, I pledge myself to keep the following covenant:—

1. I will not attend any gatherings where *nautches* are present, or invite them myself, or do anything else that tends to encourage them.

2. I will not use impure language, or tell coarse jests, or sing indecent songs, or indulge in listening to such language, songs or jests.

3. I will not indulge in witnessing indecent pictures, paintings, or scenes.

4. I will not converse or read, for the sake of mere pleasure, about subjects that are calculated to suggest impure thoughts, and will do my best not to entertain any such thoughts.

5. I will be chaste in body and will endeavour my utmost to be chaste in mind, as well as to promote the cause of purity in general.

B. For Boys.

In order to preserve my own personal purity and to encourage it in others, as being one important factor of a sound character, I promise, with trust in God's help and guidance, to try my utmost—

(1) To cultivate such habits as will help purity in thought, speech and action;

(2) To abstain, while showing obedience to the wishes of my father (or guardian), from such engagements as are likely to be harmful to personal purity; and

(3) To persuade my friends and schoolmates to do likewise.

II

A SOCIAL PURITY ASSOCIATION.

(1891)

In health—be it of body or of mind—there is a negative or abstinent, as there is a positive or active, element of duty. On the one hand, we have to curb certain cravings or refrain from certain deeds; while, on the other hand, we should systematically exercise certain faculties or diligently practise certain acts. The duty of building up and preserving a sound body, which is undoubtedly a necessary and valuable accompaniment and auxiliary of a sound mind, resolves itself into the three main factors of *temperance chastity* and *exercise*. Scrupulous abstinence in food and drink; unblemished purity in thought, word and deed; and free and healthy exercise to the system in harmless and invigorating recreation—these are the very *tripod* of health. And considering the present tastes, tendencies

and avocations of our nation in general, every one of these three imperative duties requires to be strictly enforced. At a time when the "big-bellied bottle" is supposed to be the concomitant of western culture and refinement, when the "model gentleman" thinks it no blemish, if not an actual grace, in his conduct of life to be what young Novall terms a "free colt," and when it is held derogatory to one's dignity to take part in manly games or exercises, the responsibility of pruning the prejudices, refining the tastes and elevating the moral tone of the people devolves with treble force upon every well-wisher of his country. And it is really cheering to observe that many a "good templars' lodge" and "band of hope" is springing up in the land as a solemn protest against intemperance or a sheltering haven unto repentant drunkards. It is equally pleasant to behold the country studded with "courts," "courses," "turfs" and "grounds" for physical exercise of one kind or another. Our only wish is that the promoters of these very

important institutions would proceed more modestly, directly and ardently towards the object in view. But alas! what are our countrymen doing to arrest the destructive spread of that social pestilence which eats into the very marrow of a nation ? There are at least as many that pollute their bodies and ruin their souls by looseness of morals as those that are indifferent to physical exercise; and for every votary of Bacchus are there not, at the lowest computation, half a dozen sons of Belial in India ? In the very capital of the Empire, the number of those social upas-trees whom a shameless and culpable euphemism terms "dancing girls" is so alarmingly large, according to the latest census, as to call forth a national protest and widespread agitation in any civilised country. But here in India they that are deeply tainted in body and mind are given the sanction and shelter even of religion. Sedentariness may be peculiar to those that "loom large" in their own eyes ; intemperance is, generally speaking, confined to

our modern educated man with his "veneer" of fashion and to the scum of our society; but few and far between are the thresholds in the land which the "black death" of inchastity has not at some time or other crossed. And yet next to nothing is being done to exorcise this fair devil. The whole nation, with just a few honourable exceptions, is conniving at, or partaking in, the sin; confessing by its very silence or indifference how wide-spread is the malady and how urgent the reform.

Consequently, to those that are really desirous of promoting the moral health of the nation it may be welcome news that, in the historic town of Masulipatam, a "Social Purity Association" has been started for watching or improving the moral character of its members and others. As yet our number is no doubt extremely small, and our Association very tiny; but, as a great man once remarked, such must be the necessary feature of all good and righteous institutions.—There is such close mutual relation between thought, word

and deed that every attempt to purify the national morals should touch and refine them all alike. As the good Baronet of Coverley observes, "the whole man must move forward." This principle will, to a considerable extent, explain the pledge which every member is called upon solemnly to take and religiously to keep. The pledge is as follows :—

" With thd help of God, I pledge myself to keep the following covenant :—

"(1) I will not attend any gatherings where *nautches* are present, or invite them myself, or do anything else that tends to encourage them.

"(2) I will not use impure language, or tell course jests, or sing indecent songs, or indulge in listening to such language, songs or jests.

"(3) I will not indulge in witnessing indecent pictures, paintings, or scenes.

" (4) I will not converse or read, for the sake of impure pleasure, about subjects that are calculated to suggest impure thoughts, and

will strive my best not to entertain any such thoughts.

"(5) I will be chaste in body and will endeavour my utmost to be chaste in mind, as well as promote the cause of purity in general."

Such is the little institution with an undoubtedly noble object and with, let us hope and pray, a long and useful career before it. May God bless it; and may sister institutions arise and flourish over the length and breadth of this ancient land!

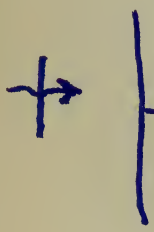
III

SOCIAL PURITY: AN EXHORTATION.

(1910)

A prince was once imprisoned in a high tower; whence he could not escape. He would go up the winding stair-case to the top, where there was a window, and look about. Beneath the window there would come and stand and weep the young woman who loved, and was loved by, the prince. The two were thus separated from each other by the cruel, impregnable tower. After a time it occurred to the girl that she should make an effort to rescue her lover, if she could. So she caught hold of a beetle, approximately took the measurements of the tower, applied some rancid butter to the head, between the eyes, of the beetle, attached a slender thread to one of its legs and set it at the bottom of the tower. The beetle, by instinct, moves to wherever there is a rancid smell. Thus, fancying something

savoury ahead, the insect went up the tower, dragging the line of thread along. To the other end of the thread was attached a string, to the string a rope, and to the rope a cord. The beetle crept up until it reached the top of the tower. There the prince took it, unfastened the thread, which he pulled up. After it came the string, next came the rope, and, last of all, the thick cord, which he fastened to some firm point in the window; and with its help he slipped down. Thus he made good his escape and happily joined the girl whose love had prompted the ingenious means of escape.



We are all imprisoned by our appetites, by our coarse tastes. We are taken captives in the great battle of a moral life and imprisoned by our own base desires. But every one has the means of escape, if only he will seek it. It would have been impossible for the young man to escape but for the young woman who made the effort and was prepared to take all the risk. In the great struggle of life, it

is to an object of love that we owe much of life's strength, wisdom and inspiration. He who would lead a pure life will best acnieve his aim by cherishing whole-hearted love for something good, pure, noble, something worthy in itself. It may be the inspiring example of a companion; it may be the moving appeal to chivalry from a helpless sister; it may be a good cause or a noble institution, that requires all the time and all the energy you can devote to it. It may be you so love your neighbourhood or town or country that there is no time, no energy left to admit of your mind being diverted from this 'master bias.' It is this occupation of the mind, it is this engagement of the heart, it is this active application of the energies to a good end—something which leaves no chance for dirty, unholy thoughts and feelings to find harbour in the soul—and not mere passive austerity, not ascetic silence and aloofness, that helps you to realise the great object of life. For, corresponding to the laziness

of the body, there is the indolence, the listless, do-nothing temper of the mind and the heart that affords room for low thoughts and base feelings. As in the physical world it is said that, where one atom exists, another atom cannot exist in the same place and at the same time, so it is the preoccupation with a noble ideal that keeps out the baser thoughts and the coarser feelings. It is, therefore, not the duty of merely weeding out unworthy sentiments; rather, it is the duty of the active cultivation of purity, the steady pursuit of an ennobling ideal, that you have to address yourselves to. You are all young men with a long, long vista, a far-stretching avenue, of life before you. None of you can say, what may be said in the case of one like me, 'Time is short, and I cannot apply myself to this prolonged, arduous task, You have the whole future before you. Employ yourselves in some worthy task, some sacred trust, and to that goal direct your whole attention and the entire force of your

energies. Ask yourselves, every one of you, what you would seek as the end of life, as the highest aspiration of your existence. Are you merely to sip some passing pleasure and sink down through surfeit? Is life with you like a boat that is tossed about because it has no definite destination? Or is it that though there is a definite destination, yet it demands, for a successful voyage, that you should sully the heart, stain the mind and pollute the tongue with things you are ashamed to mention before others? Is it that you are a helpless creature, the slave of circumstance, and must take in or take up merely what the passing day presents? Or have you set your eye and fixed your heart on something without which life to you would be a burden and an infliction—some high ideal which you strive to realise strenuously, continuously, sparing neither time nor pains? We are all liable to temptation, to impurity, because something befitting and sufficient unto the cravings of the heart has not yet taken possession of us.

It is the one dear object which you will love and hold to through good report and evil report, "midst shine or shower," that you have to prescribe to yourselves even at this time of life. There is a humorous but yet suggestive anecdote. A young man and an old man met once; and the old man asked the young man, 'What do you hold as the object of life?' The young man answered, 'Study.' What then?' 'A Degree.' 'What then?' 'Making money' 'What then?' and thus the queries multiplied, till, feeling utterly teased, the youth exclaimed, "And then I will die." And the old man still coolly asks, 'What then?' There is the final question: 'What then?' We fancy that death is the curtain that at last drops on the stage, and there is an end of the chapter. We fancy that life has to be lived out according to the present pleasure, the immediate entertainment; and there is nothing more to trouble about. I am not here to force upon you any dogmatic theology and say man will be this or man

will be that in the Hereafter. I only want you to note that the faculties, capacities and powers given to us are like so many seeds and, as each seed has in it the pregnancy, the innate potentiality, to grow and develope from year to year and from decade to decade, so we have in these faculties, capacities and powers the potentialities of inexhaustible promise, of illimitable resource; and these cannot be fully unfolded, they cannot be completely realised, unless we have as the ideal of our life some lofty, noble, inspiring, uplifting aim and purpose. That is what we should all fall in ardent love with. Some fall in love with money, others with family, others with name and fame, and others with various other vanities. Most of us are as mere children, mostly occupied with the bodily requirements; but even when we are thus diverted, we ought not to be oblivious of the main object of life. If the heart has been set upon some noble purpose, we shall keep up a struggle, we shall render unsparing, unflinching service

to the last moment of our days on behalf of the cause dear to us as the very life-blood in our hearts.

Remember the relation between the sexes is so intimate, so potent, on account of the strong, natural instinct the very hand of Providence has implanted in us, that into every concern of life, into every little act that you do, this relationship will enter, as a determining factor. It has been said of a shrewd judge that the first question he would ask of the lawyer at the beginning of a trial was, 'Who is she?' He believed that a woman had a distinct part somewhere in every case. So in the leading concerns of life—in the one great 'cause' of existence, if I may use the phrase—vast, incalculably vast, as an uplifting lever or as a depressing load, is the influence of woman. And, therefore, we have to train and habituate ourselves by systematic discipline to look upon this momentous relationship as a sacred and holy trust committed to us. One way in which this obligation brings itself home

to a heart that has a single spark of manliness in it is this. If you would be serviceable where your service is most needed, if you would be helpful when your help is most required—namely, by the weaker sex—then, first learn to look upon them with a pure eye. The service or help falls flat upon all, it fails of its purpose, unless you receive the appeal for it in the pure spirit. There is a constant appeal coming up from countless hearts—the cry of misery, the sigh of sorrow, the groan of bereavement, the tear of distress. Take two young men, each asking himself, 'Why do I owe this service?' One answers, 'Because the person that appeals is of my mother's sex'; but the other, who also responds, does it in the spirit of the gallant eager to appear fine and attractive. Again, there are those who look out for the opportunity for neighbourly service; there are some to whom the appeal comes, but who feel, out of false modesty, that they should not respond to it; there are some others who think that, if they responded, it

would bring them the credit of a chivalrous spirit ; there are yet some others who hold that the unworthy nature of the person appealing forbids the help otherwise due ; but there are a few noble spirits who could, out of a pure heart, say, "With a pure heart I shall strive to help, and through my purity I shall succeed.' If I may talk in somewhat abstract terms, in this world there is a perpetual struggle maintained between the pure and the impure, and the pure conquers the impure even through invincibility, even because its force is irresistible. The best way to illustrate the truth is this. A woman comes and, as a winning suggestion, utters or hints alluring things. But you turn round and say, 'Mother' or 'Sister'; and you instantly find the talismanic change in, the magic influence upon, the person. May I mention one or two instances? There was a cross road in Madras in some unfortunate locality; and some young men were standing there. A young female, one of those unfortunate sisters, came up and began to

talk insinuatingly. A young man there said, 'Are you not abashed? Have you no modesty? Do you not stand convicted before God? Do you not believe in Jesus?' And that was worth a hundred formal sermons for her; that was for her both a rebuke and a promise—a rebuke that she ought to behave better, a promise that, if only she had the willingness, there was the uplifting power to redeem her. I went to see a house which a relation of mine wanted to purchase. As I stepped in, I found that the house was occupied by a number of fashionable-looking young women. I did not know at first who they were; though I doubt not that I would have used the same respectful language even if I had known it. I addressed them as 'Amma' (mother). They saw that it was the natural language; only, unfortunately, the world made it foreign in many cases. Afterwards I learnt they were 'dancing-girls.' And when I left, did I not leave behind the impression that there could be a man here and a man there in the world

who would be a brother unto them? In Masulipatam, as a Municipal Councillor, I had to go and inspect some houses to fix the tax; and there was a small house inhabited by some Mahammedans. At the time I went, there was no male at home; and the woman inside said, 'Males are not at home. You cannot enter.' I asked in Hindustani, 'Amma, may I not come in and inspect?' And the answer came forthwith, 'Bava (father), is it you? Then come in and see.' Thus there is bound to be a prompt response, if only you go about in the right spirit. Cultivate that love which says that all are sisters and brothers. To the protection of the father, to the affection of the son, to the help of the brother, the response always comes. Heart meets heart in such response; for God has prescribed, pre-ordained, that our hearts should thus unite. If only we cultivate that love, we shall be thrice blessed. In the name of our Purity Association, cultivate that habit of looking upon, of regarding, of respecting every woman as mother or sister.

How shocking, blasting, killing it is that we should deny to, we should withhold from, another darling child of our Divine Mother the birthright, the Heaven-granted prerogative, to be considered a sister ! If we refuse her that, we rob her of her noblest privilege in this world. You are all acquainted with that anecdote in the life of Sivaji, who, when a young princess was captured and brought before him, said, "Restore her, restore her. I only wish my *mother* had been as beautiful, then I might have been fairer than now." That is the lofty ideal of the Purity Association. A noble ideal alone can uplift man. We read of Sarangadhara that, when his hands and feet had been lopped off, by some supernatural process those limbs were again evolved out of his body; and this was done by a golden sphere being placed before him which he was asked constantly to look at. Such a golden globe is the lofty ideal set before us. We that have the limbs of our moral being lopped off by our own iniquities have got constantly to look

up to that golden ideal. Hence I repeat, have something, some lofty ideal, to believe in, to cling to, to be guided by. And nothing is more lofty than the pure love of a young man for her whom the elders have agreed, the community has consented, and God has designed, to call his 'better half.' Many of you are married; the rest will by and by be married. Then, let each one of you be attracted and wholly attached, to his spouse. That means that you have, and shall have, nothing more left of your heart to give to another. In this world hearts are gained where hearts are given; chastity is secured where chastity is guaranteed; and love is won where love is rendered. Let me repeat, nothing is sweeter, more charming, more enduring, more transforming in life than the love which a young man feels towards her whom he makes his helpmeet and co-pilgrim through life. Let her be like the young woman in the story we started with—the agency to rescue you from the imprisonment of sense and appetite. The "maiden pas-

sion for a maid"—that is the ideal the poet commends unto you all ; and when you have acquired that, it is no longer a struggle, no longer an effort, no longer even a desire, to be able to keep yourself pure. Why, then you will naturally and necessarily be pure. Have you not known instances where a man comes into, and settles down with, a family, till by and by he becomes a member of the family and has a recognised place in the household and he says with a smile, "Cut off from you, where can I go even inspite of occasional differences and superficial disturbances?" So, too, whatever the passing agitations on the surface, the human heart attached to the settled object of its love says, "Where can this heart go? It cannot go. It is fixed there."

Every life is a life of slow but steady and sustained endeavour : as in our starting story, first, the thread ; then, the string ; then, the rope ; then, the cord. You build up your life little by little. It is not by means of comprehensive, abstract princi-

ples that you can build it up. We all have —including my own unworthy, sinful self, we all have—each his own weaknesses, frailties, temptations ; and God surely knows what they are ; and we can gain our end, we can secure ultimate triumph, by adopting and practising certain definite self-chastening, self-ennobling disciplines, one after another. Upon the tablet of the heart and with the style of conscience, engrave the 'confession' of your weaknesses and look up and say, "By God's grace, under God's guidence, through God's help, I shall address myself to the wrestle with each of them." Am I really able to withdraw my interest from something that is very entertaining but at the same time subtly seductive ? Then I am struggling successfully.

There was an old man, now no more, who said, 'I agree with Mr. Naidu in all this Social Purity Movement, except for this one reservation that I cannot discard the dancing girls ; from whom I have received so much of the benefit of

soul-enchanting music!' As if I ever disowned the claims of the finest of fine arts! No; I only deplore the unfortunate association, the injurious relationship, that has been permanently created between music and 'a fast life.' This alliance must be broken, this union must be dissolved, if the cause of Purity is to prevail. Such is our frailty that we are unable to give up some little indulgence. One friend is prepared to go with you the whole length of your principles and your programme, if only you excuse the old 'uncensurable' habit of 'snuffing.' Another friend would be glad to be at one with you, except that in his youthful days he so eagerly studied, and has thus imbibed the manner and phraseology of, light literature. These and such as these are not mere trifles; they are tests, however small, applied to us when we undertake anything serious in this world. God prescribes certain tests, not that He may know what man is, but that we may perceive and judge ourselves. There are innumerable such tests which

we have to stand; and nothing is more unfortunate than to fancy and to say, 'We have signed the pledge, and we shall be sound.' It is not the pledge that saves life. It is the life that saves the pledge—saves it from dishonour or disrepute. See to it, then, that the pledge you take and the life you live are not in disharmony with each other. It is the life that must be the guarantee for the pledge, not the pledge that can stand security for the life. Therefore, take the pledge, read every word in it, look up to God and say, 'Father, grant me the strength to keep this.' In this world, we must be either striving upward after some high ideal or sliding downward towards some weakness, be it only gradually. There is no such thing permissible as conquering the field and then resting. We must either go forward or go backward. If the imprisoned prince in our story—after taking out the thread—had said, 'I have done,' he would not have succeeded in his attempt. So also a man has to discipline himself. First, give

up the impure act. Then, go deeper and give up the vicious inclination. Then, descend deeper still, and let the discipline consist in the cultivating of the opposite kind of desire and, next, the opposite kind of act. Say unto yourself, 'Here I am, impure in thought and act. First I shall give up the impure acts and thoughts, then set my foot in the opposite direction and develop the opposite kinds of desires and inclinations, so that this eye, which hitherto cast lustful looks on a sister, should then be able to throw a halo of chaste love around the same sister." First, it is the little habit that has to be curbed. Next, it is the powerful inclination that has to be obliterated ; and then, the opposite kind of inclination and action has to be sedulously cultivated. Never fancy a little thing does not matter. In this world there is an inseparable and, therefore, natural connection between cause and consequence. A soldier was once posted by the side of a moat, and asked to watch and report, should ought extraordinary

happen during the night. He watched, and reported nothing in the morning. However, the news was otherwise received by the authorities that a man had fallen into the ditch and broken his neck. When asked why he did not report the occurrence, the soldier replied, 'Where is anything extraordinary in it ? The man was drunk; hence, he fell into the ditch and broke his neck.' Similarly we indulge some of our weak tendencies ; thereby we steadily slip down ; and when we are gone into the pit, there is nothing extraordinary. The inclination is in a certain direction ; hence, the struggle must be in the opposite direction.

And for this great fight there are three things requisite. The first requisite is Prayer. Here again, I do not press any dogmatic theology on you. We may have our own religious beliefs and observances. But whatever these may be, pray we must, under all systems ; for 'more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.' Pray ardently when there is

an evil tendency in you. It is impossible that we should succeed in this fight single-handed, without God's help and inspiration. Prayer has a double effect: it helps you to ward off the temptations; and, as if by a mysterious law, it brings you an illumining response from on high; so that you are enabled to see the purer and finer aspects of the same old thing. The second requisite is Self-examination. Sit you down, alone with the Alone, as witness, in your closet at the day's end and honestly review what you have done and been all the day long. Many a sad tale our conscience tells against us. For your part, however, avoid these two opposite mistakes. On the one hand, condemn not yourself to an undue degree; never despair; never throw up your cap and say, 'It is not possible for man to win!' God never assigns to us any duty that we cannot cope with. He always squares our strength to our task. Hence alone it has been possible for our weak race to be striving and crawling upwards all along. If

not, the race would have been given up long, long ago as a hopeless affair. On the other hand, steer clear of complacence. You can never be too good, you can never do too much good, in this world. The very fact that so much has been done itself denotes that such a great deal more is yet possible. The third requisite is Fellowship. Attach yourself to somebody whom you know to be pure, that so the current of pure thought and aspiration may set into your heart from a higher being. Here again, it is the same discipline that all great religions have prescribed as a rich spring of inspiration and moral energy—*sadhusangam*, as it is called. It is the self-same *satsangatvam* which the deep-sighted Sankaracharya has, in his marvellous survey of the soul's progress, named as the starting stage. There is a notion common amongst us that heroes are few and far between and the bulk of the people form but the nondescript crowd, the motley mob. It is not really so in the moral government of the world. There is

the heroism of a striking, glorious moment; there is also the heroism of sustained daily life. It is this latter heroism, connected with the routine-round of duties, that is open to you all and is expected of you all. Among the Jains, there is a restriction that no man should kill a living being or see life killed. So that one may observe some Jains constantly waving their *uttareeyams* (upper cloths) before their mouths and noses, that little insects in the air might not get in and be killed. Others actually sweep the path before them so that they might not trample down any ants or other small creatures while walking. Others, again, actually lie down on a bed full of bugs so that those little things may receive their share of nourishment. Some of these acts and attitudes are, no doubt, excesses. But is there not a touch—a mark—of heroism in them? Likewise, there is a silent heroism that we are all capable of and that we are expected to disclose in what apparently are mere trifles. In systematic self-control in the

thousand and one claims and demands of life there is genuine heroism. Cultivate that virtue of self-control, not only in physical irregularities, but also in mental excesses and moral aberrations; that thus your growth might be all-round. Let each of you tell himself, 'I shall endeavour to subdue this excess or that exuberance, even because any excess and any exuberance in one direction tells against, retards, the growth in some other direction.' Be balanced ; be all-round, in your growth and expansion ; for then you will own and enjoy what most people in and of the world do not at present possess—peace that passes understanding ; love that overleaps all limitations; and life that surpasses time and circumstance. God's best blessings be with you all !

IV
THE PURITY PLEDGE : ITS CALL TO YOUTH. (1914)

I may tell you at the outset that there are, indeed, several classes of members in an organisation like this of the Young Men's Social Purity and Temperance Association. To the first class belong those—and they are very few—who, by God's grace, could say, 'I have observed till now, and will continue to observe in future, the principles of this pledge.' That is the first, the superlative, the blessed class. There is a second class of members—and to it belong a great majority amongst us—who could say, 'I am only honestly and persistently trying to realise these ideals in their fulness by God's grace ; I cannot say I have been able to satisfy the standard fully.' And so it is. What we have already been hitherto able to do—that ought not to, and shall not, be considered satisfactory. It is a testing ideal,

it is a severe ideal, it is an exacting ideal, for it is an ever-expanding ideal, that stands before us. What is considered to be satisfactory today will prove unsatisfactory tomorrow. You ought not to rest satisfied that today you have not frequently entertained an impure thought. For, there is ever a species of impurity that does not catch our attention ; because it is so nice, so subtle, so insidious that we are not able to detect it easily. Also, the absence of impure thoughts does not necessarily mean the presence of pure thoughts; just as the absence of thorns and weeds does not necessarily mean a wholesome and fertile crop; or as the absence of ill-health need not always denote a state of sound health. 'I have not entertained an evil thought;' 'I have not cast a lustful look;' 'I have not turned my ear to an indecent phrase'—this argues only purity on the negative side. But there is a positive side to it which you must take up. Thoughts and inclinations have a profound effect upon character.

The sight of beauty—what is the kind of feeling that it evokes? Is it the low craving of a carnal nature; or is it the middling feeling of æsthetic admiration; or is it the high sentiment of chivalrous awe and reverence? Shall I give you an example oftentimes recurring to my mind? There was a beautiful Mahammedan princess taken captive by the soldiers of Sivaji. The captain of the troops took her as a prize to Sivaji, hoping that the Maharajah would be immensely pleased with the tempting present. But when Sivaji saw her, he said, 'Had my mother been as handsome as this lady is, I should have inherited some of that handsomeness; and then I should have had a right to look at her. Take her away, therefore; let us not tarnish her with our black hearts.' That was worthy of a Maharajah; that showed a true hero; there lay the real might of the great founder of a potent empire! And this is true of every species of greatness, whether it be the prowess of the arm or the keenness of the eye or the

firmness of the will. To give you another example. There was an ancient *rishi* who was performing 'tapas' (penance) in a certain forest. It was said the heat of the 'tapas' disturbed the very Kingdom of Devendra. So the gods above met in conclave and sent down an 'apsarasa' to distract the attention of the *rishi.* The fair tempter presents herself before the *rishi* and parades her celestial charms. What does the saint say? 'Blessed is the son born of such a lovely mother!' So, it is not the carnal gaze of a vulgar man, not the sentimental look of the man who admires beauty, but it is the pure sight of the man who reveres beauty that is our goal. No doubt it takes a long time to attain that blessed state. It has been said that Rome was not built in a single day. Likewise, character is not built in a single day. It is, indeed, of slower growth than the so-called "Eternal City;' and you have to pass through a prolonged, sustained process of growth—of strength, refinement and elevation. Look at the growth of the

banyan tree. Almost microscopic is the seed from which it sprouts; it continues to grow through countless years, generation succeeding generation, and century added to century, until it attains those marvellous dimensions that make her one of the wonders of creation.

This pledge of ours does not hinge upon those two words, Purity and Temperance, merely in their ordinary narrow acceptation. Really the terms represent for us, as they ought to, many a noble virtue, such as veracity, sincerity, integrity, fair-mindedness, dutifulness and a good many other traits blended into that homogeneous whole, a sound character. Purity does not imply merely the averting of the eye, the closing of the ear and the bridling of the tongue. It is the cementing factor in the whole life. Realise the 'mother' all over the world. Learn to say, 'Every woman is represented in my mother;' and so live out the ancient sacred dictum, *Dhanyo mathru mukhassuthah!* 'Blessed is the son that reflects (or visions) the face of

the mother': When I think of my mother, I must necessarily think of the whole sex affectionately epitomised into my mother. The mother is the mother, not merely because she has nursed me at her bosom, fed me with her hand and fondled me with her caresses, but also—and more so—because she is the symbol of all that is pure, all that is chaste, all that is tender, all that is affectionate, all that is patient, all that is persevering, all that is forbearing, all that is long-suffering, all that is self-denying and—what not? When you realise this, then features that are plain and commonplace will be enlivened into fresh beauty, and voices that are stale and familiar will acquire a new music and a new harmony. Learn to be the 'son.' You are the son, not merely unto her who is the bodily mother of your corporeal existence, but unto every one in whom is concentrated all that is chaste and noble. Likewise the sister, likewise the daughter. Such soul-relation constitutes a quickening suggestion, a holy call

to a well-ordered life. The evil with us all lies in thinking that the ordinary relations are commonplace. But the father and the mother, the uncle and the aunt, the brother and the sister, the husband and the wife—all these relations have a profound significance. Can you really believe that we are all drawn together and knit together only that we may feel a passing physical or domestic pleasure? No. Revering a mother, honouring a father, cherishing a sister, loving a wife — I should think that these are altogether priceless privileges granted unto us by a benevolent God.

Remember, therefore, that this is a pledge not merely of purity and temperance but also of faithfulness and devotion; this is a pledge not of so many lines or of so many days; it is really a pledge of solemn vows for so many months, so many years, so many generations, aye, so many centuries; this is a pledge not on the paper on which it is printed; but it is a pledge of the heart on

which it must be engraved; this is a pledge not of words but of thoughts, of ideas, of strivings and of resolves; this is a pledge not of passing interest but of permanent life-adherence. Early and clearly realise this. Without invidiousness, I may tell you that you are at a great advantage in being thus reminded of this latent promise in you. When we were young, there was no such encouragement given to us. Remember, at the same time, that, after all, others can only rouse up what is dormant and foster up what is germinating in you. Remind yourselves individually; remind one another as so many brethren forming an organic body the several parts of which cannot possibly be disconnected; remind yourselves thus, individually and conjointly, that the true life of this Association does not consist in so many meetings, so many conversations or so many lectures. The essential factor of your duty as members lies in upholding these high ideals in your lives. Your perception is keener, your sensitive-

ness is tenderer, and your admiration for the truth and sublimity of these ideals intenser than ever before, even as you learn to perceive how far yet you are behind these ideals. You should feel roused, not only from the time when you have become a member of the Association, but even from the moment when you first hear the word 'purity'. From that moment you should be able to accept life as a solemn and sacred trust from on high; and you should resolve to struggle your way through the tremendous temptations to which your thoughts, your imaginations and your inclinations are exposed, albeit you feel that the strength of the heart is hardly equal to the arduousness of the task before you.

I have mentioned to you two classes of members. There is, yet, a third class, consisting of those who, swimming their way across life's solemn main, feel caught in a whirlpool; and we should all help get them to the shore! Remember that these are the stray ones dearest unto

God. A certain text in the Christian Bible says—and it is immaterial for us whether it is the Christian Bible or the Hindu Veda—that it is not the ninety-nine sheep that keep the right path, but it is the one that strays from that right path but is brought back to it, that is dearest unto the shepherd. Similarly, it is not the ninety-nine souls that, by God's grace, are able to keep the right path that we should love; but it is the one that is struggling and calling out that the current is so strong, that the foothold is so weak, that the depth is so alarming, and that the heart is so faint—it is that one that we should love and succour most. To this class belong a good many, though we suppose that they are not many, because we are not aware of the fact.

This is an Association of comrades, of a fraternity in which there is the elder and the eldest, there is the younger and the youngest, there is the stronger and the strongest, there is the wiser and the wisest, and there are the erring and the

struggling of divers grades. These last, let me repeat, it should ever be considered a vital part of our own ideal to uplift and to safeguard. There are only a few select, happy souls—and God's blessings be with them!—that have never felt the throb of temptation. To them we may say, 'We may not be what you are; but we honour you for what you are.' When filled with the feeling of thankfulness, we should learn to be thankful, not merely for what we have actually got, but also for what we have not yet attained which others have already achieved.

Remember that, in the dispensations of God, the sinner of today may be the saint of tomorrow. To the all-seeing eye of God the vision is different from what it is to our narrow view. Unto God, the river Nile, which is a slender silver line at the start, then a narrow channel, next a broad stream and at last a vast flood, is all mapped out in a single glance; and He is able to appraise the narrowest portion as well as the broadest part of it. The struggling

and the penitent of 'now' may be the sanctified and cherished devotee of 'hereafter.' With those who stray rest our beckoning sympathies; for those who struggle are our cheering good-wishes; upon those who fall is our tender compassion; and for those who sin—not for those who have not sinned but for those who have sinned and are penitent—are our ardent prayers: that even the life of each one of them may in future cheer us and encourage us all!

V

THE SOCIAL SERVICE DUE TO INDIA'S WOMANKIND.

(1908)

All the world over, and in India to an uncommon extent, woman is superior to man in morality. What we have to improve here is the moral condition, not of women, but of men. If there were no men with 'capering' hearts, the existence of 'dancing girls' would be an inconceivability. You should fasten the blame upon the demand, not upon the supply. It is the toddy-buyers that need to be reformed, not the toddy-sellers. In every instance of customary treatment, we, in course of time, virtually compel a class of persons to assume that position and play that part to which society has wantonly consigned them generation after generation. This habit is like that of a certain woman, made a queen by marriage, who could not relish the delicious dishes of a royal ban-

quet unless they were doled out to her, a beggar for a good while, as handfuls of alms. Likewise after generations of unjust treatment, no wonder if woman has ceased to be an inspiration to man. But if you cultivate the spirit of reverence for womankind, you will find that woman is inspiring, indeed. As you look at a woman, does your heart throb with awe and reverence as in the presence of a saint? 'How shall I treat a woman?'—that is the test-question for one and all. When a woman is in need of a little service, a look of brotherly encouragement, do not let go the opportunity. Rajah Rammohan Roy never sat down while a woman of any rank was standing in the company. You ought to cultivate that gracious spirit. You can help and honor a woman in numberless ways. Will you bear with me if I venture to refer to a few suggestive instances even within the experience of a poor, frail, humble individual like myself? It was true service rendered, though very slight, when certain Indian ladies, who had come

to see a magic-lantern exhibition, needed seats, and I was privileged to be the first among those who offered to give up their own chairs for the ladies. On another occasion, the opportunity for such service came to me when my second-class ticket was made over to an Anglo-Indian lady in exchange for her third-class ticket during a railway journey in midsummer. Again, when some boatmen on the Buckingham Canal at Bezwada were seen cutting vile jokes with a poor woman who appeared to have lost 'caste' as a respectable person, I asked her what the matter was, addressing her as *amma* (mother). Then she looked up with a gleam in her eyes, as if to say, 'Is there one in this world who feels any regard for this unfortunate woman ?' On yet another occasion, a young woman selling butter-milk on a railway platform expressed herself in simple heart-felt thankfulness with the words, 'Aye, *Babu*, teach them a lesson that way,' pointing to those whom I had gently rebuked for presuming to flirt with

her. Again, how significantly sublime is the story, in one of the Puranas, of girls remaining unclad while *rishis* robed in purity passed by them! Mr. W. T. Stead, Editor of *The Review of Reviews*, so dead against every kind of oppression or compulsion, has had to pay a heavy price for the advancement of Purity in England, in connection with the passing of a Bill prohibiting an immoral traffic in girls under the age of twenty-one. For what he had written and done on that occasion he was, on a technical point of law, sentenced to three months' imprisonment. But his dauntless exertions overcame all opposition; the conscience of the country was roused; and the Bill, at first strongly opposed, was enthusiastically passed. Again, all honour be to Gladstone, who could tell Sir Charles Dilke himself that, in consequence of his figuring in a divorce case, he could no longer be a member of the Cabinet! And accordingly, ever after, Sir Charles Dilke, once talked of as the coming Premier, had to hide "his dimi-

nished head." Mr. Stead, again, illustrated in his own life the paradoxical saying, 'The Child is father to the Man.' When but six years old, he had fought a boy of twelve; as the latter was seen peeping at a girl who was tying one of her garters with her leg placed on a culvert. And as Mr. Stead grew up, he grew to be the noble champion of purity, truth and freedom. You, young men, should cultivate the like spirit of advocating, and enforcing pure sentiments. To this end, you should form three wholesome habits: constant and reverent study of pure ideals; constant and active fellowship with good men; constant and prayerful supplication to God. You should elevate your ideas of woman until you come to realise that benevolence, not drudgery, is incarnate in her. You should learn never to tolerate the humiliation, the degradation, of woman, in whatever form it be. Wherever there is an opportunity, you should be all too prompt to help or serve your mother's sex. Go forth, clothed in your own purity; and you

will change the whole atmosphere. Go about, appealing to women that they too are God's children ; and you will feel exalted in their elevation. The great womanly virtues are not dead in the 'dancing girl.' Only the hard crust of custom has gathered around her soul. Break the crust, and you will find a pure life springing up in her. But since there can be nothing in the effect that is not already in the cause, store up purity in your own hearts by means of inspiring ideals, ennobling fellowship and prayerful self-dedication to God's glory ; and you will be as a cheering light, as a bracing zephyr, as a sanctifying baptism, wherever you go. God bless you all !

VI

IDEALS, SELF-CULTURE AND CHARACTER:

PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH,

BRAHMOTSAV PUBLIC MEETING.

(1915)

It would be plain to every one of us here that these three addresses merge into one whole—self-culture the effective method, ideals the uplifting force, and character the resultant blessing. Through arduous self-culture, inspired and impelled by lofty ideals, we are enabled to build up that solid moral character which is the end and fulfilment of life. Man has been vouchsafed life, neither for narrow physical enjoyment nor for limitless, now-complaining, now-hurrying ambition, but for the slow, steady development of concretised, realised principles to which we give the name of character.

The key-note of character is the quickening, passionate sense of the *ought*—of the right, of the proper, of the obligatory, of

the truly benevolent. The man of character is he who, in the dark day of doubt or in the troublous day of trial, acts, neither from the calculations of policy nor from the promptings of future profit, but entirely from an instinctive adherence to the sense of the right, firmly clings to, and faithfully follows, what he knows and believes to be the right, the due, the proper, the *ought*. Be it the payment of a time-barred debt or the recognition of a voiceless rival; be it the surrender of personal gain in obedience to the supreme call of unpopular truth or a loyal adherence to the post of danger while destructive fires devouringly gather around—whichever be the situation—the man of character is the votary of the *ought*, of the right, of the due, of the proper. And this sense of the *ought* does not argue, does not calculate. It is purely and entirely instinctive. It feels and resolves. It does not act and watch. It acts and pases on. Consequently, it requires something more than the mere sense of principle, the mere feeling

of duty, both to acquire and to exemplify character. It is the formation of that habit which becomes a second nature—a prime force of life. Hence, character is something sub-conscious, if I may use the expression—something that is formed in the unseen foundations of human life. It is the construction, not in the glare of broad day-light, but in the seclusion of reflective meditation, of a strong marble bed-rock on which are fixed the bases of practical life. And this, in its turn, operates as one of those mysterious forces which guarantee the enduring stability of the life of the whole world. Now it takes the form of insight, then of disinterestedness, next of inspiring vigour, again of uncompromising self-assertion, and once again of unreserved self-surrender. But whatever be the particular expression it wears, in its essence it is the sense, the strong, abiding, quickening sense, of the *ought*, of the right. Like the unfailing attraction between the magnet and the needle, the sense of the *ought*,

the sense of the right, is verily the ceaseless current of union between God and man. For, when the sense of the right, not stopping with merely its own imperativeness, addresses itself to, and receives its sanction and warrant from God, then morality is sublimed into piety and right conduct transmuted into love. Thus character becomes only the ethical name for prayerful trust and practised piety.

Self-culture is the earliest as well as the latest of all methods of culture. Every system of culture first means preparation; it next becomes fostering care; and then it results in harvesting and storing for future cultivation. In all culture, therefore, are implied these three factors of breaking the glebe, sowing the seed and growing the harvest, and reaping it for future use. All culture, therefore, of the mind and the heart must begin with self-culture—with that rudimentary self-culture to which we give the name of *self-recognition*—not merely self-consciousness but self-recognition—' self-reverence," as Tennyson

has it; that appreciation of the real value of the rich possibilities of the individual. And there it is that self-culture begins; and it goes through the various processes of study, of meditation, of devotion, of company, of service, and so on, till it again culminates in what we call *self-realisation*—not self-sufficiency but self-realisation; realising, if not in the full actual, at least, in the pregnant potential, the incalculable, the inestimable powers which are the God-given heritage of every soul.

Thus we may observe how man, endowed as he is with faculties that reach out in all directions, may become the equal comrade and brother of the diverse varieties and types, not only of human beings but of *all* beings. He is in humble, trustful fellowship with those above him. He is in hearty, sympathetic fellowship with those around him. He is in serviceable, loving fellowship with all objects that, according to the common gradation, are held to stand underneath him. Thus we come again, through self-culture, to that

self-realisation which expresses itself in what the great German poet, Goethe, called the *three Reverences.*

Man is alike the wearied subject of adverse and opposing forces and the lucky favourite of helpful, propitious surroundings to which we give the name of environment. And of all the elements in man's surroundings, those select factors which most further his growth are what we call his *ideals.* Thereby man is not merely cheered on, because the best in his environment does not simply tolerate; but man is really helped on, his capacities drawn out by the potency of his ideals. Thus it is that ideals are a living, vital agency in unfolding the latent virtues of man and so shaping his character.

Hence we may perceive that in these three addresses we have, if I may use the ambitious expression, a full chart of our life—its right methods, its favourable circumstances and its ultimate realisation. Cultivate your self, sparing no pains. Seek and imbibe lofty ideals, drawing no

invidious distinction between one and another. And realise that character in which alone lies the justification of human life and the gurantee of human continuity.

VII

OUR AIM AND OUTLOOK.*

(1886)

East and West, the Spiritual and the Practical, the Speculative and the Active, are, at the present time, contending over the soul of India. New thoughts and new ideas, new hopes and new aspirations, are fast springing up in the Indian mind. The old order is daily changing, yielding place to the new. A mighty bloodless revolution is occurring all around us. Far as the mind can view, two strong but opposing currents of thought are at work; and the result is that some are carried away by one current and some by the other. But there is, thank God, a small but daily increasing band which holds that the two seemingly conflicting elements might, with a little patience and forethought, be made to aid and further each other. And holding this view, we will express our

* To introduce *The Fellow-Worker*, Madras, January 1886.

humble but honest opinion on every moving topic of the day.

The sum of human happiness is contained in that single word, Religion. The basis of every human concern is Religion; which is, indeed, the greatest boon that man enjoys. But the religion that we will plead for to the utmost of our poor capabilities is, not the religion of hostile creeds and clashing churches, nor the religion of rites and ceremonies, of rituals and sacraments, but a faith and a hope that are.

"Lofty as is the love of God,
And ample as the wants of man."

And in commending this religion, we will touch upon every topic of interest and usefulness. We will deal with questions of Education, Society and Morality as, respectively, the planting, the growing and the harvesting processes of Religion. In Religion, we will advocate love; in Morality, justice; in Society, liberty; and in Education, culture. As a rule, politics we will not deal with. But questions of po-

licy may never be divorced from the demands of morality. We will, therefore, as occasion many arise, discuss important political topics from the stand-point of justice and righteousness.

None is more alive than ourselves to the utter, inadequacy of our capabilities. The aim is high, the performance will be commonplace . Feeble hands have taken up a great task. But every man has a mission. We will, with the help of God, honestly attempt to accomplish ours, to the best of our humble capacities; and "who dares do more is none." We will, as our name implies, be the Fellow-worker of every honest and faithful servant of God. Rama's hosts were building the bridge across the southern channel; a poor squirrel felt it her duty to help the righteous cause. She dives into the sea, rolls on the shore, and shakes her little weight of sand on the bridge. She catches the eye of the hero; who deigns to acknowledge her services by tenderly passing his kind fingers over her back. Such

will be our small service in the holy cause of Truth; and such, we hope and trust, will be the kind patronage of the public.

VIII

THE HIGHEST LAW.

(1886)

Morality is the essence of religion, the verification of our hope and faith, our ideals and aspirations. The hidden root, the secret spring of morality is religion. The two run so close into each other that, if separated, each by itself is useless or aimless. Without morality, religion is base hypocrisy or hollow superstition. Divorced from religion, morality is; at best, calculating selfishness or prudent abstinence. Morality vivifies religion; religion sanctifies morality. Two sides of the same grand human nature, the negligence of either is the degradation of the other.

But what is the sum of morality; the acknowledged golden rule? To "love thy neighbonr as thyself," "to cherish all creatures as thine own person," has in all ages been applauded as the highest law. With

the sanction of unnumbered generations, the precept that we should do unto others as we would that others should do unto us is handed on to us as the highest principle of morality; nor were they ordinary souls that laid down this wise rule. Self-love is an instinct, a deep-seated natural prompting, in every bosom. Imprinted on every heart and ruling all one's thoughts and actions, this instinct is the source of all offence—of all injustice and inhumanity—in the world. It runs through every human concern; it is the motive-power of all human movements. With their incommensurable wisdom, therefore, our ancestors, who were deep-read in all the secrets of human nature—its prejudices and its predilections—summed up the essence of all morality in that one golden rule which has ever challeged the just admiration of a civilised world.

"Hear virtue's sum expressed in one
Brief maxim—lay it well to heart;
Never do to others what, if done
To thee, wonld cause the inward smart."*

* Muir's *Metrical Translation of Sanakrst Texts.*

How noble is the maxim; and how far short does the world fall of it! Ignored by rulers, unheeded by statesmen and held impracticable by politicians, this golden rule has always been honoured more in the breach than in the observance. War and pestilence, greed and ambition, sin and selfishness, hold the world fast in their iron grip; and any plea for the equality and liberty as the birthright of all is a mere fancy, an idle day-dream. How grand, how noble, how far fairer than the fabled Eden would this sinful world—this hotbed of iniquity, this very sink of all that is unworthy and ignoble—be, if each person placed the world at par with himself? "Chapels had been churches and poor men's cottagss princes' palaces," if one and all held it a supreme duty to accord to others what they universally price so highly—liberty and love, the right to obtain and to possess all that is held "pure and lovely and of good report." But no; systematically the world ignores the principle; man loves himself but not his neigh-

bour as himself ; and so long as this noble rule is not practised and honoured in active life, human nature is doomed to be narrow and degraded.

But, after all, this love of one's neighbour as oneself does not appear to be the highest law. The acme of true morality is loftier than a just recognition of the world's equality to one's own self. In fact, with the growth and refinement of man's moral nature, the love of self sinks and ultimately disappears. The patriot that bleeds in the country's cause ; the philanthropist that, by his dumb eloquence and silent self-sacrifice, pleads the cause of his very murderers ; the doctor that throws himself into pestilence and even sucks up poison to snatch a precious life from the sharp scythe of the "grim old king;" the mother that embraces death to ensure the safety of her innocent babe ; the lover that risks and lays down his own life in defence or pursuit of the beloved ; the martyr that smiles on the scaffold and seals the truth of his con-

viction with his life-blood—all live and move and have their being in an ethical atmosphere purer, nobler and holier than that of the morality enjoined by "Love thy neighbour as thyself". To live up to the dictates of a pure conscience and to uphold an inspiring ideal is an impossibility with one who takes any cognition of self as such. In the higher stages of moral progress, in the loftier flights of philanthropy and heroism, self is left behind as a mere nonentity; God, truth, and the world are the only concerns; and faithful service in their behalf and towards their glorification is the sole aim and ambition. To love thy neighbour as thyself is surely a noble law, a golden rule; but to shake off self, to live for the peace of the world and the glory of God, is the noblest of all laws, the very crest-gem of a moral precept. A total denial of self, an unhesitating march into the very forefront of truth, is an absolute necessity in the more advanced stages of that endless pilgrimage called life.

But a realisation of this, the highest moral law, can come only in the wake of some other sublime experiences. An unswerving faith in the potency and ultimate triumph of truth must invariably precede a love of truth for its own sake. There should exist an unwavering belief in the continuous march of the world towards truth, justice and righteousness—an unhesitating sacrifice of all that one is or has, on the altar of truth, simply because it is the truth. And this firm belief in the final victory of truth presupposes an equally strong belief in the existence of an All-wise, All-guiding Principle with infinite qualities—infinite power, infinite wisdom and infinite love. If the world is continuously making for righteousness; if human nature is incessantly gaining ground towards truth and virtue, an All-guiding God is an inevitable pre-requisite. As Professor Stokes, the present President of the Royal Society, said in a recent address, a Divine Being, a Wise Deity, is a very necessity of thought, when the world

is understood to be systematically progressing in truth and purity. Thus the highest morality and the most charming yet the simplest religion recognise and embrace each other as twin-sisters; and thus a deep self-denying love for God and His world, and not a calculating utilitarianism—"the gospel of enlightened selfishness"—is the basis and the key-stone, the motive-power and the moulding process of the highest morality, the noblest manhood. Let us then offer our hearts to our God and our actions to our neighbours, solely out of pure, disinterested love; resting assured that ours will be a noble heritage that jealousy cannot steal, time cannot exhaust and death cannot usurp.

IX

THEISTIC CATHOLICITY AND SYNTHESIS.

(1891)

Our idea of God is the mould in which all our beliefs are cast. It is the axis around which our whole working faith revolves; it is the nucleus aroud which all our "first principles" cluster. From it our thoughts take their particular shape or turn; to it our emotions owe their comparative range and refinement. Indeed, rightly understood and firmly grasped, it forms the true basis of our knowledge and our judgment; for so closely does our conception of the Deity weave itself into the texture of our entire intelligent life that from it every single idea derives its respective strength or charm. The twin principles of Catholicity and Synthesis, which constitute two of the noteworthy characteristics of Theism, are thus the natural implications of the Theistic conception of God.

The Fatherhood of God is the compelling cause of Theistic Catholicity. It is as the Parent of one and all that God is no respecter of persons but is the personal Teacher, Guide and Saviour of every soul. In His house there are no "untouchables"; from His banquet there are no "outcasts." His providence is limitless in its reach; His merey embraces the whole creation. The witnesses of His wisdom have spoken in all ages; the "decalogue" of His goodness is engraved on all hearts; and He is the prime source of truth, wherever disclosed. Every soul is the direct offspring of the Deity; and with Her own hand the Divine Mother feedeth all Her children, each according to its own needs and capacities. The treasures of God's truth are the equal 'heritage' of all mankind; and His is the holy inspiration to whichever soul imparted. Hence, Theim welcomes the light of truth, of wisdom and of goodness from whichever quarter shed.

Again, the Unity of God is the groundwork, the "nexus," of Theistic Synthesis.

God is absolutely one—one in person, one in design, one in love. In Him there is, there can be, no mutability or partiality. Consequently, His truth is one, uniform, self-consistent. To whatever age revealed, in whichever region proclaimed, His truth partakes of His own nature, is absolutely one, and is characterised by His own power, wisdom, goodness and holiness. Various aspects of His truth may have been disclosed to men at different times and under diverse circumstances; but the many phases of His truth naturally and readily cohere into one whole, as being mutually supplementary or explanatory. Whatever declines to enter into His harmony, whatever refuses to assort into this unity, whatever tends to or results in narrowness, in ignorance, in exclusiveness, or in impurity, is, to that extent, not of heaven heavenly, but of earth earthy. To that degree, it has the "brand" of untruth upon it; and, to that degree, it should be boldly and promptly cast aside. When the tares of man's sowing should thus be weed-

ed out, the garden of God's truth would be a real Eden—the eternal abode of God.

It is the confluence of these two vital principles of Catholicity and Synthesis that gives to Theism its breadth of outlook and its continuity of progress. Without Catholicity, it would be too narrow for our growth; without Synthesis, too chaotic for our trust and hope. It may be that unto "sectaries" its Catholicity will appear a confounding vagary; as to "free-thinkers" its Synthesis will seem a relic of ancient bigotry. But unto the eye of faith in a *living* and *loving* God, Theism, as the resultant expression of the joint work of these two vital principles, is the "whitest" spiritual light into which close, as in a heavenly harmony, the varied charms of the rainbow.

X

A MAHAMAHOPADHYAYA ON RELIGION. (1889)

Reluctant though we be to measure lances, especially on matters of theology, with a Sanskrit scholar of the learning and reputation of Mahamahopadhyaya Paravasthu Venkata Rangacharyulayyavarlu Garu of Vizagapatam, our allegiance to the beam of light that is the star upon our path and the lamp unto our feet, our deep regard for the erudite and liberal-minded Mahamahopadhyaya and the supreme importance of the question at issue, prompt and encourage us respectfully to state our views upon some of the points which he so ably discussed the other day at Nellore.* Apprehensive of the poor chance we stand against so veteran a knight, we nevertheless enter the lists, with the confession that, in responding to this call of duty, we are not unaware of either the weak spots in our armour or the defects of our weapons.

* *Vide The Hindu*, February 22, 1889.

Most gladly do we express our unqualified agreement with the learned Mahamahopadhyaya in holding that Religion is simply indispensable alike for individual and for national progress and happiness. It is our deep-rooted conviction that no person or race can be truly strong, peaceful and happy without a firm reliance upon a wise and loving Father and Ruler, a lively hope of a blessed future and a keen sense of moral responsibility. With us, that science is an aimless quest, that philosophy a purposeless probing, and that civilisation a pretentious show which ignores or eliminates Religion; and they cherish the Laputan dream of building from the roof downwards who aspire to construct a society without the solid basis of a true, deep, liberal religion. In all ages Religion, rightly understood, has been the dearest treasure—the strength and the delight—of the true believer's heart; at all times firm faith in a wise Providence has been the harbinger of national peace, progress and prosperity. The greatest

of heroes, the noblest of martyrs, the most ardent of patriots, the most selfless of philanthropists, have in all countries been schooled in Religion and have always graduated from the Academy of Faith. Never has a man or nation been really great without religion--without deep, pure, childlike faith in God ; for, they who have ventured to sail "over life's solemn main" without the rudder of faith, the compass of hope and the steering of the Almighty Pilot, have been either wrecked on the rocks of temptation or drifted to the shores of disappointment. It is trust in an unerring Truth and submission to an omnipotent Love that result in high thinking, pure living and noble doing. By counselling the bold and strengthening the weak, by confirming the loyal and assuring the wavering, by curbing the precipitous and consoling the bereaved, by refining the coarse and softening the hard, Religion plays a potent part in the fulfilment of the one increasing purpose that runs through the ages. It chisels off crooked-

ness, wears away prejudice, sinks selfishness and gives a mighty impetus to the high hopes and aspirations that make us men. Under its holy influence the barren brain blooms with fruitful thought and the desert heart is enriched with purity and love. True faith gives a meaning to life and a purpose to history; without it the former is but an aimless struggle and the latter but the sport of chance.

Would that we could equally agree with the learned Pandit on other matters! Extremely kind and courteous to individual Brahmos, he sets his face against their religion. He thinks that Theism is doomed to failure as a popular religion by its rejecting all revelation and by its exalting human conscience as the sole criterion for distinguishing right from wrong. This, we respectfully submit, is, at least, misleading, if not positively incorrect. That the Brahmos reject all revelation is wide of the fact. Theism would be a curse to society, a blight to the human soul, if it tended to stem the stream of light

that flows from God to man. But, thanked be the All-Merciful Father, Theism is too humble, pious and scientific to promulgate so fatal a doctrine. Far from perpetually closing the channel of sweet intercourse between the Parent and the child, the Brahmos assert that revelation is not the speciality of a certain age, the provincialism of a certain land, the monopoly of a favoured race ; but that it is a universal phenomenon co-eval and co-extensive with humanity. Wherever truth is boldly upheld, virtue duly honored, righteousness faithfully cultivated and self-sacrifice cheerfuly accomplished—each for its own sake, as in them lies the soul's normal state—there is revelation ; for thus are God and man brought together. Free as air, broad-cast as light, impartial as the genial showers of heaven, revelation informs the head, quickens the heart, strengthens the conscience and illumines the soul of every upward-looking man, to whatever clime or time he may belong. "This wide universe is the sacred temple

of God;" revelation, in its truest and most catholic sense, is the 'open sesame' to the mystery of religion ; and man is, by his very birth, entitled to the bliss of communion with his Father in heaven. Gracious God has willed that all His sons shall be blessed in His Presence and in His service ; and that revelation, in diverse ways and to various degrees, shall be vouchsafed unto every one whom His power creates, His wisdom guides and His love cherishes. The Brahmos assert that, not only in some mythical past but at every minute and every second of time, the Divine Spirit is passing over the pregnant waters of the human soul, evolving it into a purer, nobler and holier being and that with every beat of our hearts the Lord's will is being proclaimed to the waiting millions of the world. They assert that He who feeds the ant in its hole and the raven in its nest, who has spread out the feast of His favours and the banquet of His bounty everywhere under the sun, whose matchless wisdom

controls and whose boundless love embraces the entire round of things, has not left Himself without a manifestation in any age and does not doom the human soul to die of want or to find stale nutriments in the crusts and crumbs from the board of antiquity and to drink, unfiltered, of the water that has drained into itself the dust and sediment of the ages it has run through; but that, with a father's care and a mother's love, He keeps his hospitable door ever open, that the hungry and the thirsty, the unclad and the homeless, may find food and drink, raiment and shelter unto their souls. If by revelation is meant that descent of the Divine upon the human spirit, that touching of the human soul with the flame of heaven, that cleansing of the individual with the baptism of love, which subdues the lower self and on its stepping-stones raises man to a higher life; which kindles the silent altars of duty and opens the hidden springs of activity; which recognises the absolute dependence of the soul upon its Author and raises it above

the murky atmosphere of a sinful world into the peaceful and happy bosom of its God and Father ; and which blows away the selfish barriers between man and man and knits the whole of humanity into one free and loving family of which God is the sole Parent, Protector and Guide, then the Brahmos most emphatically assert that such a revelation has been, is, and will ever be—from end to end of time. In the words of one in whom the East and the West are happily blended, who is the product of a deep study and a wide knowledge of both Sanskrit and English, and who, instead of confining the heavenly gift of revelation to any *particular* age, book, nation or country, takes his stand upon the lofty principle of the universality of inspiration, "Religion is as widely spread as humanity itself. God's revelation to man was made not only at a certain period in the world's history, but it began with the dawning of human intelligence and went on progressing through all ages, and it is going on still and will

go on. God is ever with us, communicating more and more of His truth to us as our powers of apprehension become purer and keener. The latest phase of His revelation to man is that embodied in the (Theistic) movement which we here represent."* Thus we hold that the load-star of revelation, which guides the humble and cheers the way-worn, shines upon the path of *every* child of God, here dim and disturbed through fog and cloud and there bright and serene in the clear horizon.

But this self-same belief in the catholicity of faith and the universality of revelation shuts the door against the idea that Heaven's guidance is restricted to one particular age or country; nor do we see our way to the acceptance of the theory that for all times and all climes has been given one final, clear-defined spiritual guide and ethical code to doubt which is blasphemy, to gainsay which is iniquity.

* *Basis of Theism and its relation to the so-calle Revealed Religions* by Ramakrishna Gopala Bhandarkar, M. A., PH.D., C. I. E

If by revelation is meant a book or a set of books whose origin is, as a rule, veiled in antiquity; within whose covers is confined the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; whose authority is the highest on all conceivable things; to which the individual consciousness must ever yield priority or be postponed; before which reason must be silent, conscience dumb and the heart awe-struck; in whose contents must be found clear indications, though under an esoteric shade, of the latest theories in philosophy and the most recent researches in science; and from whose dictates man should never, at the risk of the eternal welfare of his precious soul, swerve by a single inch, then we do not hesitate to reject the idea as a good old fancy. Man is a being of conditioned faculties, capable of unlimited progress; and a revelation made to him must, to suit and benefit him, partake of his nature. The soul's normal state is growth; and knowledge as acquired by the soul must also grow. Truth is like a mighty

river: it takes its origin on the heights of Divinity; ripples forth as a thin, silver line of crystal water; gains in volume and strength as it flows; receives tributaries from different directions; rushes and wheels, falls and rises, narrows and broadens, according to the peculiar features of the tracts it courses through; and, at last, breaking forth into a thousand channels of beneficial activities, terminates in the ocean of Infinity. The comprehension of infallible truth lies with the Eternal Mind. No more can man's limited understandnig sound the depths of infallible truth than his narrow heart can enclose infinite love. If, as is generally put, truth is God Himself, both are alike outside the range of complete comprehension by man. If there is a purpose in nature and a destiny towards which the world is making, truth must be progressive. Infallible books must be expounded by infallible annotators, who in their turn must be borne out by infallible evidence, which, again, is void unless furnished by

infallible witnesses before an infallible judge; and the learned observation of Dr. J. F. Clark is true not only of an infallible church but also of any authority claiming infallibility, that the claim can be made good only by an infinite series of infallible witnesses and admitted only by an infallible tribunal. Have we not read how on the insertion or the omission of an *i* (iota) or of a long *a* (*â*) depended the substantiation or the rejection of a fundamental article of faith? Revelation as made to man is necessarily relative. "When God makes the prophet, He does not unmake the man." All the traits and peculiarities of the recipient's mind dim, alloy or divert the truth. The mind is not a passive reservoir but an active appreciator of truth; and all the idiosyncrasies of the man—his ruling ideas and moulding environments—give a particular shape and tinge to the revelation. In the very act of reaching, refining and expanding one's head and heart, conscience and soul, God's truth, which is gentle and plastic

as ice, takes an impression of the features peculiar to the person. No two persons are the same all round; and Heaven's boundless wisdom, while retaining its high integrity and main identity, deigns to bend and adapt itself to the needs of each man. It is said of Charles V of Spain that, having abdicated the throne and entered a convent, he used to amuse himself by clock-repairing. This noon he sets all the clocks exactly to the same minute; the next noon no two of them agreee with each other! "Thoughtless man I was," says the Emperor, "that I, who cannot make two clocks go alike, hoped to make all people think alike!" Any truth, like a stage in a journey, is appreciated with reference to the ignorance left behind and the fresh avenues to truth open before; its place is determined as a point in a line of progress. The value of a truth lies at least as much in the exertion—thought and enquiry, prayer and meditation—put forth in its acquisition, amidst possible risks and failures, as in

its own intrinsic worth. "If God should offer me," said a great man, "the absolute truth in the right hand, and the love and pursuit of truth in the left, I should choose the left." Revelation, in matters spiritual, is essentially subjective. Man is pre-eminently a thinking and feeling being; he cannot help it, and he likes it. It is the great Rubicon between him and other animals; and truth, above all things, is an object of personal quest and adoption. What has been disclosed to a person of a certain age or country is no revelation to one of another age or country, unless the latter is similarly circumstanced as the former and is equally competent to give an independent, personal recognition to the truth. Food nourishes the body, truth feeds the soul; and neither the one nor the other can be taken vicariously. No more can a telescope supersede the use of the eye, or the most advanced type of machinery dispense with the presence of an initiating and guiding mind than the revelation made to another man and re-

corded in a book can obviate the necessity of a person working out the life-problem for himself. If there is no royal road to Geometry, there is absolutely no other path to truth than the one which a person, under the guidance of God and the helpful advice of the elder brothers in the great family of humanity, can cut out for himself. The grand law of 'sow and reap' is nowhere so true as in the investigation of truth. An infallible guidance is but a mechanical guidance incompatible with a free will and a full growth. Has the All-merciful Donor of all blessings endowed man with the precious gifts of intellect and emotion, conscience and devotion, that they may be mere parasites on an infallible revelation or be stunted in their growth under the deep shade of an overshadowing *guru*? An impious thought! For no kind of easy conveyance would we bargain away our own legs; nor shall we cast out our own eyes that we may be safe under a skilful guide. Again, they give us but a Hobson's choice who ask us to

exercise our head and heart upon a revelation that has been premised to be infallible. To allow a person full freedom of reason and reflection and yet to insist upon his moving only along certain well-defined grooves and upon his arriving at a pre-established conclusion, lacks consistency. Freedom of thought is the invariable pre-requisite to independence of conviction and action. Either the data should be withdrawn or the whole proposition admitted. Truth should be known to be admired and felt to be followed. Man is the climax of creation only when he is manly in head and heart, when he knows what he says and feels what he knows. "Heart within and God overhead" are his sure guides; to "trust in God and do the right" is the sum of his duty.

The main distinction between Natural and Revealed Religion* is that where the

* We use the words in their ordinary, wide-accepted signification. But as manya Theistic writer has shown, they really refer to one and the same phenomenon as viewed from the human and the divine stand-

former leads the latter goads, where the former persuades the latter compels. Natural Religion appeals to man's heart, Revealed Religion points to antiquity; Natural Religion treats man as a being cast in the image of his Maker, Revealed Religion considers man to be but an improved variety of the simian species, which refuses to dance and do its work unless the rod of authority be held up. The motto of Revealed Religion is nationality; the watchword of Natural Religion is nationality refined and expanded by rationality. "Follow in the wake of your fathers;" says Revealed Religion, "obey the mandates of old; ask no questions; make no inferences; draw no conclusions. Hold your impotent reason in abeyance; dogma and faith shall sway supreme." "All that is old," says Natural Religion in the wise words of immortal Kalidasa, "is not therefore necessarily excellent; all that is new

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point. Religion is *natural* to man as understood, felt and assimilated by him, it is *revealed* to him by God, the Parent of all Truth.

is not despicable on that account alone. Let what is really meritorious be pronounced so by the candid judge after due investigation ; blockheads only are swayed by the opinions of others." Natural Religion is bound to be catholic ; Revealed Religion cannot but be exclusive. With the latter God has spoken ; with the former He is ever speaking. The age of miracles is past, exclaims Revealed Religion; it shall never pass away, asserts Natural Religion. The former brands man as the offspring of darkness ; the latter cheers him as the child of light. The first states the laws of God to be inexorable ; the second proves them just and beneficent.

Nor is the appreciation, by a Theist, of the wisdom of other ages and countries any the less for his belief in the universality of inspiration. Rejecting the theory of plenary inspiration, he recognises that the dove of Heaven's "Holy Ghost" has been flying through all ages and countries and alighting at some time or other upon the head of every child of God: that He

who is truth itself has in all ages been speaking in the native vernacular of each heart; and that, shaking off the narrow satisfaction of the 'frog in the pond,' man should go forth, like a bee "from bower to bower and assiduous sip at every flower." Disowning faith in an infallible revelation, which, by restricting the inspiring grace of God to a certain period of antiquity and to a limited portion of the world, seems to lie but a few stages off the camp of cold Deism, the Theist finds in his God a living Deity and a loving Father who knocks at the door of every heart, lights the lamp of inspiration in every soul, seeks after and reclaims every wandering sinner. He honours the prophets and seers of all ages and countries; he draws in, like gentle gales from distant lands, messages of wisdom and good news of love, from all quarters. For him the finger of Providence is working everywhere and the whole universe is one ever-unfolding chart of God's revelation. In spirit he is humble, in the search of truth

unbiassed, in the appreciation of wisdom catholic. To him there is no book but may disclose a precious fact, no man but may display a particular phase of God's greatness. He is the heir of all ages, the pupil of all teachers. His admiration for the records of the experiences of the past is reasonable yet profound; and his mission is to distil out, drink and assimilate into himself whatever is pure and lovely and of good report in every branch of knowledge. He aspires to the head of a Plato, the heart of a Jesus, the courage of a Luther, the faith of a Chaitanya, the fire of a Mahammed, the self-sacrifice of a Buddha. To him the different "sacred books" are but the several chapters of that endless volume which God Almighty has from time immemorial been writing on the sensitive tablets of the human heart. Once again to quote from that worthy representative of the Theists in the Western Presidency, Professor R. G. Bhandarkar, "let us exert ourselves to bring into practice the teachings of the old Rishis and learn

from all the sources now available to us, indigenous as well as foreign. Let us learn from the Vedic hymns that the temple in which we should find God and worship Him is the universe and the heart of man, from the sacrificial religion which once prevailed that we should beware lest the forms and ceremonies we use should overgrow and destroy the tender plant of spiritual worship, from the rise of Buddhism that religion is not the privilege of a favoured class and that without high moral feeling and action it is an empty nothing, and from its failure that mere morality will not exalt the spirit and satisfy the religious craving of the heart, from the Upanishads that purity of heart is the way of arriving at God and contemplation brings us face to face with Him and elevates the soul; and from the Gita and the *Bhakti* school that man by his own efforts cannot effect his salvation, that God alone is our Father, Friend and Saviour and that we should lay our souls at His feet, live in Him and for Him and not

for ourselves. If in all humility we learn this and learn whatever else is to be learned from the other sources that God in His mercy has laid open to us and follow our Guide fearlessly and faithfully, we need not be afraid of our future."

Next we may briefly notice some of the questions raised and statements made or implied by our good critics.

A very serious objection is taken to the supreme authority of conscience in moral questions on the ground that its dictates are not uniform in humanity. To make a demand of this kind is, we think, unphilosophic. Like all other human faculties, conscience admits of variety, change and growth. Originally imbedded in every heart and never entirely absent from any breast, conscience is dimmed or brightened, blunted or sharpened, weakened or strengthened by culture and environment. Invested with all the authority of the vicar of God in man, conscience lives and grows upon the care with which it is cultivated and the obe-

dience with which its mandates are carried out. Every time its angelic voice is heard and abided by, man gains in strength and fitness for the march of life; every time it is slighted, man is sapped of his energy and faints by the wayside. God All-merciful has established so intimate a relation between our various faculties that, like a powerful lever, each raises or lowers all its fellows with its own rise or fall. The strength or weakness of any one of them does not go without a corresponding effect upon the rest; and to expect a level uniformity in the measure of conscience in all mankind is to ignore the marked differences that exist between man and man in any society. The charm of God's creation consists very largely in the variety of its contents; and society is so framed that men may be one another's complements. An inflexible standard of right and wrong is against the ways of nature. God's justice is seasoned with mercy and savours of Divine Love, only when it judges every human being, not

by a stern unchangeable law in which the Medes and the Persians would rejoice, but by the beam of light upon that man's path and the fund of facilities at his disposal. "Unto whom much is given, of him much shall be required," necessarily implies the converse truth that unto whom little is given, of him little shall be required. The world is a vast school where each pupil is trained and disciplined in accordance with his tastes and capacities. To expect an invariable standard of morality, therefore, involves not only an impossibility in fact but also a reflection upon the wisdom and mercy of God.* That the conscience of an evil-doer lies dormant does not in the least tell upon the strength of the Theistic argument. This life is but the preliminary to an endless career that ranges beyond

*Writing some half a dozen years ago, one whom the whole country knows, honours and loves—Mr. A. O. Hume—says, "Admitting that truth is infinite, and that our minds are finite,—that not only is the point of view of each individual *somewhat* different from that of even his neighbours, but that the stand-points of different nations and different ages are *widely* different,—how

the grave; and Divine Nemesis invariably follows every act of neglect or disobedience. He is doubly ignorant who is not aware of his own ignorance; and he is doubly pitiable who is not conscious of his own spiritual blindness. If, as Cowper says,

"Freedom has a thousand charms to show
That slaves, howe'er contented never know;"

how deplorable is the fate of the creature who is morally enthralled! The evils of sin, like the pain of a disease, must be *felt* to be remedied. Punishments and rewards are intended to be correctives and incentives; and that they may successfully serve their purpose, there must be an antecedent sense of violation or obedience. Health and palsy may be equally

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can any really wise and spiritually-minded man contend that *any* scripture can be an *infallible* revelation to mankind generally of the present day?" "No infallible revelation of Divine truth would be of any use to us mortals." "Divine truth resides only with the One Only."

exempt from pain; but from what diametrically opposite causes! Identical is the difference between a strong and a seared conscience. Is the malefactor's fate happy and enviable, then? He who is blind to the divine law and deaf to the prophetic voice in his very heart and soul will not be cured by the external authority of any *Sastras*.—To reject the claims of conscience on the ground of its apparent absence in children is, we venture to think, as unphilosophic as the learned verdict of our "free-thinking" brethren that religion is a priestly imposition from which primeval savages are happily exempt. Both ignore the latent possibilities of a child and a savage, and both forget the universal law of progress. The child may be 'father of the man', and the savage the hoary sire of the civilised; but to measure the full proportions of an adult from the swaddling-clothes of an infant or to estimate the aspirations of a cultured person from the narrow notions of a barbarian, is to taunt the stately oak that it was once a tiny

acorn. The first germs of conscience are in the infant bosom, pregnant with possibilities of growth under the pure atmosphere of a pious home and the genial light of a godly instruction. Nor has history been barren of striking examples of the working of conscience in children. The leader of the Theistic thought in America, Theodore Parker, was but four years of age when, returning home from a church of which his father was the minister, he saw a little tortoise peeping out from the water in an adjoining tank. He lifts up his stick to beat the tiny creature; but he hears a voice of warning and remonstrance, his infant hand is suddenly arrested, he turns round to see whence the sound has proceeded. But finding no human being within ken, he runs home and narrates the whole incident to his mother. The worthy lady takes the boy in her loving arms and says feelingly, with tears trickling down her face, "That voice that you have heard some men call conscience, but I prefer to call it the voice of God in the

soul of man. If you listen to it and obey it, it will speak clearer and clearer, and always guides you right; but if you turn a deaf ear and disobey, then it will fade out little by little and leave you all in the dark. Your life depends on your heeding this little voice."

By conscience the Theists mean the divine urge in the human soul, the counsel and guidance from on high, the oracle of God in man. But our good critics would seem to take it in the sense of unilluminated human wisdom gathered by personal experience—that sense of prudence and utility which is bred in man by a knowledge of the work-a-day world; and they naturally question the efficiency of the faculty as a spiritual guide. If conscience denoted the frail unaided human reason, it would certainly be suicidal to depend upon so fickle a guide. But conscience is of Heaven, though subject to human capacities or limitations. It is the inward mentor who speaks with authority and enforces his commands. It is Heavens direct-

ing finger on the tablet of the human heart, the current of inspiration straight from the throne of God, the throb and motion of the soul under a divine influence, the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night to lead the wayfarer across the desert of the world. In obeying the dictates of conscience man does not rely upon his own weakness but yields himself up to the guidance of that Omniscient Master whose service is his salvation. The oracle may be heard here in sweet seraphic tones, there in low wavering whispers; the luminary may in one place shine clear in heavenly radiance, in another it may be screened behind the mists of ignorance or superstition. But in our God is found the blissful harmony of infinite Power, boundless Wisdom, and unlimited Love. He teaches, He judges, He loves, He saves. In the dispensations of Him unto whose omnipresent eye the end is disclosed from the beginning, sooner or later, here or hearafter, good is the final goal of ill and every winter changes to spring. The light

that shineth upon every heart is our sole guide. Shut against it, man is open to no other benignant influence. God's merey *alone* availeth!

In pleading for the prime recognition of individual conscience and experience, a Theist is often charged with arrogating to himself that infallibility which he denies to all else. But the truth lies just at the opposite pole. By his very act of advancing a personal right to Heaven's direct guidance, a Theist is obliged to admit an identical claim for every human being. Nothing is a more effective deterrent to that self-sufficiency which rejoices in its own ignorance or forces its crotchets upon the world than the consciousness that the same Parent of light who sends forth a ray into his soul is every second illumining the hearts of His countless creatures; and that where others see and walk, he yet feels and crawls. Nothing is half so well calculated to humble pride, defeat ambition, rebuke egotism and put self-exaltation out of countenance than the belief that

he is himself but one of a myriad receptacles of Heaven's golden showers, and that his poor puddle is a sorry thing by the argent brooks and the crystal lakes all around; while the most potent incentive to diffidence and humility, search and meditation, catholicity and fraternity, is the conviction that every soul, however low or dark, is a shekinah of God. Thus is self killed, wisdom honored, and the world constituted a spiritual republic.

Religion is life; and life is growth in knowledge, faith, love and service. The function of religion is to refine, expand and intensify those ideas, hopes, emotions and aspirations whose embodiment or realisation is life. This axiomatic truth is differently expressed when the internal growth of man—his individual consciousness, the native prompting of his soul—is said to be the test of religious growth. It is only when the beautiful moon-lit countenance of truth shines direct upon the garden of the heart that the philomel of the soul bursts forth in heavenly harmo-

monies of praise and prayer. It is only when the nectar of truth is imbibed into the blood and the sinews of the soul that religion shapes itself into holy lives and happy homes, free commonwealths and model societies.

Toleration is the watchword of the times. But toleration presupposes the right to free action as prompted by individual mind and heart. Except on the postulate that every man is at liberty to follow his lights, that the law enacted in each heart—the voice heard in each bosom—is the supreme authority for that man, toleration would not only be meaningless but also amount to a deplorable negligence of an imperative duty that man owes to his brethren.

The study of comparative religion is in these days warmly advocated on all hands. But unless the human soul is acknowledged to be endowed with certain fundamental spiritual intuitions which constitute the data for measuring the relative excellence of the diverse claimants

to appreciation, a study of comparative theology is, we will not say futile, but simply impossible. According to a well-known legend, perhaps apocryphal, Khalif Omar consigned a cyclopean library to the flames on the strength of an argument whose logic was, from his view-point, irresistible. If those numerous volumes pretended to contain what was, in its essence not comprised in the one 'God-given' *Kitab* (Book), theirs was insufferable presumption; if they could advance no such claim, they were an unmitigated superfluity. Either way what was believed to be the 'garnered wisdom' of ages was demonstrated to be worthless. This would evidently reduce to an uncomfortable dilemma the position of the student of comparative religion who also owns allegiance to one infallible scripture. Is not that positon rather closely akin to the pious formality, described by Emerson, in pursuance of which grave church-dignitaries would meet in solemn conclave, invoke divine grace and guidance in the selection of a worthy hand for a

vacant see, and invariably fix upon the person whom the King, the Defender of the Faith, had already commended to them for acceptance? An impartial and appreciative study of different modes of faith is possible only for him who believes that wherever man aspires, God inspires; and that the majesty of a living soul overtops the authority of an antiquated script.

The acme of all religion is absolute faith in God—an implicit trust in the guidance of Him who is our Father, our Teacher and our King. But this faith is begotten of the conviction that in all ages and countries God bestows a parental care upon each individual soul; that every human being has a right to direct, intimate communion with Him; and that under the genial sunshine of His truth the spirit grows in purity, piety, wisdom and love. Faith springs from a personal consciousness of God's power, wisdom, mercy and holiness—of the mighty miracles that He has wrought in one's own soul.

Hence, viewed from any stand-point,

our stay and strength lies in personal conviction, individual consciousness—the harvest of God's inspiring work in the soul. May the gracious Father grant us all the love and the courage to welcome truth, wherever found, and to gather to our bosoms as sisters and brothers of the same family the good and the true of all ages and of all countries !

We should exceed the space at our disposal and overtax the patience of the reader, if we entered on a detailed consideration of the other interesting subjects dealt with in the learned lecture under review. A cursory reference to some of them is all that is possible. We are happy to be at one with the Mahamahopadhyaya in rejecting the Christian doctrine that with this brief span of threescore and ten years the probation and the activity of the soul close for ever, and that through endless ages there will occur no change, there will ensue no growth—in fact, there will be nothing to do save singing in heaven or seething in hell. It is

an article of faith opposed alike to 'sense' and 'sweetness.' The human soul is an offspring of the Spirit of God ; and a deity that can condemn his own issue to everlasting suffering is, as Herbert Spencer feelingly remarks, immeasurably crueller than that Fijian God who is alleged to feast on the souls of the departed. As Tennyson puts it in his own happy style, the God of Love and the God of Hell—together they cannot be thought. Yet the dogma of eternal hell seems to be the strongest 'apology' for the dogma of "vicarious atonement;" for as that eminent English Theist, the Rev. Charles Voysey, has acutely observed, granted that there is no eternal hell and that punishment is only remittent and remedial, there would be no need or justification for 'vicarious atonement.' How noble, then, is the touching utterance, 'Hell is the hospital of God!' —It is not, however, clear to us how the orthodox Hindu dogma of the transmigration of the soul is the only alternative to the orthodox Christian dogma of eter-

nal doom. Is the world beyond the grave so barren of growing life, or is the 'ethereal spark' in us so helplessly dependent upon a fleshly cover, that, banished its heavenly abode, it must inevitably and repeatedly enter a "darksome house of mortal clay" for any progress in wisdom and holiness to be possible? Are the post-sepulchral regions utterly foreign to refined aspirations and sublime activities? Is the final goal of man, after all, sheer inactivity—a dormancy disturbed by no dream? That, we think, is the only legitimate inference from the theory that an unembodied soul is incapable of progress or growth. But the very significant modification of the orthodox conception introduced in the reincarnation theory by our brethren of the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society is, to our mind, suggestive of the belief that the spirit perpetually rises, on the stepping-stone of the dead self, to higher things. Ours, therefore, is the faith, which is in perfect consonance with the profoundest intuitions

of the heart, that, 'after the second birth of death' 'life shall live for ever more' 'the broken arcs' of this world shaped into the 'perfect round' of heaven.—We are again happy to be able to share in the esteemed Mahamohopadhyaya's view that pure, heaven-inspired love, far from being restricted to human beings, enbraces 'both man and bird and beast,' aye, even the 'kingdoms' below the animal. Nothing shall lie outside its rule—not, certainly, those mute, trustful friends of man, the animals, which are, with the sanction of so-called religion, daily butchered by the score. The plea that, when thus slaughtered in religious ceremonies, the poor victim compasses its own as well as the sacrificer's happiness and salvation, hardly merits a more serious treatment than the Charvaka's scathing taunt,'then let the sacrificer forthwith offer his own father!" —It is again difficult for us to follow the lecturer in his *dictum* that the difference between the three main sects of the Hindus is but slight. If, as is admitted by the

warmest advocate of Hinduism, the distinction between the three schools of thought and belief reaches down to the fundamental conceptions of the nature or attributes of God, the relation of the universe to the Prime Cause, and the ultimate destiny of man—not to speak of the many minor, though significant, points of divergence, we fail to see how one can set aside the Hon'ble Mr. P. Chenchal Rao Pantulu's conclusion, now become almost classical in its expression, that "Hinduism is an encyclopædia of religions." It cannot be that the erudite Mádhavácharya was conjuring slender shades into imposing figures in his *Sarvadarsana-Sangraham.* However, we have no mind to discount any laudable desire to narrow the gulf between the diverse 'creeds' of man. But this noble end can be accomplished only by setting the spirit free from the fetters of dogma and by sifting the essential from the non-essential, the eternal from the transcient, in human faith.—As regards th allegory intended to justify the worship of Siva or

any other *supposed* deity, let it suffice to observe that the Mahamahopadhyaya himself admits that such worship is in substance false, though the adorer's heart is not in the wrong. No doubt, ignorance may be no sin. But, if the essence of worship consists of both Truth and Love, then is it not the prime duty of wisdom to help a brother to withdraw from error? True tolerance implies something more than good-natured non-interference; it springs from that large-hearted trust, that keen-sighted sympathy, which ever strives to elicit the best, the truest and the loveliest, in human spirit. Never will an appeal to the native instincts of the soul fail of its object; 'Jove nods to Jove from behind each one of us.' If, as declared by a competent authority or indubitable evidence, 'religion is a universal phenomenon of human nature,' it is because divine 'grandeur' intimately permeates human 'dust'; it is because, 'the Truth in God's breast lies trace for trace upon ours impressed.' Hence, the supreme—indeed, the sole—

aim of the progress of the race should be to circle up from 'man' to 'God,' even to that crowning round, that transfiguring height—with its universal matin-song of a fadeless morn, with its eternal bridal of "the love of Truth and the truth of Love."

XI

PRAYER AND WORSHIP.

(1882)

"No prayer, no religion," observes Carlyle. Such is the great importance of prayer or worship to religious life. 'Should I pray; need I pray?' is substantially the question asked by every person who professes to be earnest about religion. This question arises in the mind spontaneously and repeatedly; and it has to be answered by every enquirer after religious truth.

There are certain desires and longings which arise in the human heart instinctively; they require no conscious effort to be brought into view; no process of logical reasoning is a pre-requisite to their recognition. They spring right from the centre of our nature, and they seem to be based upon instincts or intuitions deeper and firmer than logical processes. Prayer is one involuntary craving of this class. It is induced by a "felt want;" it is an

appeal to One infinitely higher than man for the removal of a need of the spirit. As it springs from a pressing sense of an urgent want, it is but natural that the soul should turn and look up to a Power above for help and guidance. The hungry child turns to its mother for food; the hungry soul turns to its benign Mother for spiritual food. The beggar "writhing under the inclemencies of weather" knocks at the hospitable door; the sinner "smarting day and night under the compunctions of conscience" knocks at the merciful door of God. The seeker of knowledge resorts to the teacher for instruction; the soul in quest of wisdom seeks the feet of Him who is the Supreme Teacher of all. The patient implores the aid of the physician; the sick soul implores the aid of the All-wise Doctor, who alone can cure the dreadful malady of sin. In all these cases the action is instinctive and spontaneous, the natural outcome of a deep-felt want. The child, the beggar, the student or the patient does not act in consequence of elabo-

rate and accurate reasoning, but from the promptings of native instinct. Nothing can successfully prevent him from seeking the aid ; likewise it is impossible to prevent the yearning soul from supplicating the help and guidance of Him who has created the soul and has been mercifully showering invaluable blessings upon it. Both are acts of spontaneity ; and set reasoning cannot influence them materially either way.

Nor is there anything opposed to reason in the several elements of Divine worship. Worship is generally divided into adoration and thanksgiving, confession and supplication, repentance and self-surrender. Is there anything unreasonable or improper in these religious exercises? To adore Him who is supreme and to praise His excellences and celebrate His glory can never be improper. There can be nothing unbecoming in man humbling himself before his Creator and imploring His help and guidance. When will man be acting more in accordance with his sense

of gratitude than when he thankfully acknowledges the countless blessings of his ever-merciful Father? Is it a superfluous act to own our faults and follies before the all-witnessing God and implore His saving help to recall us from the paths of disobedience and thanklessness? No man can really deem it unnecessary or unimportant to beseech God to draw the pen of forgiveness over his sins and to cast upon him the eye of mercy—to implore God to treat man not as he deserves but as His Love prompts. Aware of our weaknesses and alive to our shortcomings, what other safe way can we discover for our life than that of completely surrendering ourselves to Him, who is infinitely wise, powerful and merciful? Thus worship is imperatively necessary for every believer in God. Again, there is something very remarkable in the fact that in all ages and among all nations Divine protection and Divine guidance have always been supplicated. Systems of religion at mutual discord in other respects stand side by side

in defending the practice of prayer and in commending that practice to the world. All the different faiths, from sublime Theism to primitive Fetichsm, are at one in their advocacy of prayer. It cannot be that they are all mistaken, that they have all been imposed upon, or that they have all entered into a conspiracy, as regards this important matter. It would, therefore be perfectly reasonable to recognise the practice of worship as based upon a fundamental truth of human nature.

Again, the objections generally urged against prayer are, in our view, not so strong as to shake the position of believers in prayer. No doubt, God's purposes have been providentially planned; and it is idle to dream of disturbing them by our solicitation. But true prayer does not ask for those gifts which God does not want to give us, but it implores those very gifts which He specially means to grant unto us. Our appeal for them only marks our hearty appreciation of them. The value of spiritual riches lies largely in our spirit

eagerly craving for them; our very asking indicates our strong-felt need of them. Even because we knock at the door eagerly, the time comes for opening the gates of the store-house of spirituality. The soul seeks and God reveals; the soul asks and God grants; the soul knocks and God opens: thus man's desires and God's designs come into line. Furthermore, it is the faithful heart, it is the firm resolve that is the real requisite; there is no need of choice expressions. Undoubtedly the value of worship lies in its utter sincerity: 'Words without thoughts never to heaven go.' Nevertheless, 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' There is a relief or a satisfaction in the tongue uttering forth what the heart strongly feels. If a sense of thankfulness is kindled in the heart, it will come out spontaneously. Whenever the soul throbs with devotion, words will flow out of their own accord. Moreover, by the very act of prayer we bind ourselves to work assiduously either for uprooting a vice or for implant-

Words without thoughts never to heaven go!

ing a virtue, Also, earnest prayer and beep meditatioh clear our ideas of God and bring us into closer touch with Him. As a consequence, we pray in a more fervent spirit, we meditate with deeper concentration; and thus we are taken nearer to God. Thus the practice grows; and in the final result, worship comes to be recognised as the very soul of our religious existence; but for this communion with our Father, religion would be found to be a mere skeleton without any vitality.

It might, again, be asked whether worship—prayer and communion—is indispensable for a religious life, apart from the argument that prayer is spontaneous or reasonable. Strictly abstaining from wickedness, vigorously practising goodness, faithfully serving humanity, may not man lead a religious life? Against this question, we can only appeal to the experience of those that have prayed and communed for the best part of their lives. We believe that, according to them, only to abstain from wicked deeds, merely to

perform good acts and simply to render kind offices to those around us, do not constitute a truly religious life. Him we regard as religious whose soul, turning away from all that is worldly, draws nearer and nearer unto Him who is supreme over us all. Him we recognise as a pious man whose words, thoughts and deeds have God for their goal and proceed from Him as their prime source. Him we esteem as a devout man who centres his whole interest in things of enduring goodness and loves them, not with a utilitarian calculation, but for their own dear sake as God's self-manifestations. Now, is it possible for any one to be religious in this sense without being in direct touch with the great Fountain-head of all holiness? Does it lie within the power of a frail mortal to fight the strenuous battle of life except with the aid of the Omnipotent? Can any one except Him who has created land and sea and rules them with unquestioned supremacy sustain weak man against the buffets of "the formidable waves of world-

liness"? Worship is the very life-blood of our religious constitution, it is the very foundation of the whole edifice of human faith. Prayer is the royal road to heaven; it is the cypher-key for opening the gates of the City of God; it is the passport for prompt admission into the abodes of Immortality. Prayer is a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire to guide us across the wilderness of this world; it is the unerring clue to the perplexing labyrinth of this life. Divine worship enables us to present an invincible front to all the temptations of the flesh, to overcome with an irresistible force all the allurements of the world, and to face unflinchingly all the threats of ungodly power. In the religious life of man prayer is a nurse in infancy, a comrade in manhood, a consoler in sorrow, a healer in ailment, a companion in adversity. Dashed about by the merciless waves of worldliness, we find in prayer the sole plank of safety and escape. Given up by helpless physicians, wept over by sorrowing relations, we find in

prayer the only true friend that stands by and imparts hope and comfort. Prayer is the lovely angel that fetches the flowers of peace and hope and spreads them on the death-bed. It is prayer that inspires the trust and faith to depart "swan-like and sweet"; it is prayer that ferries the soul across the unknown main and lands it in the haven of the great Beyond; and it is prayer, again, that ushers the suppliant spirit into the august presence of Him who is Immortality itself. Therefore, gentle reader, pray incessantly and find your true happiness in the blessings that prayer brings. Take refuge in prayer, carry with you the companionship of prayer; and you will illustrate in yourself Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Find your prime duty, your chief occupation, your supreme joy in prayer; and you will be led, almost involuntarily, to exclaim,

"If there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this! It is this!"

For, when are we, when can we be, half so happy as at that blessed hour when our

great Creator and loving Father stands before us with the smile of love, and we bow down before Him in extreme trust and supreme hope? When do we, when can we, feel half so comforted and cheered as at that blessed hour when God turns His gracious ear, as a tender and benign Mother, towards us, and we freely pour forth, in sighs and groans, the tale of our sins and transgressions, and tears, penitent tears, rush up and wash away the dust of worldliness and wickedness that has enveloped and bedimmed the light of conscience in us? Truly and verily, enviable is the position of him who prayeth incessantly and hopefully. Let us all repair to, and fall down upon, the hallowed feet of our Father, tender our humble tribute of gratitude to our Lord, praise and glorify the gracious Saviour who has vouchsafed unto us the invaluable boon of free communion even with Himself, the Eternal and the Absolute; since this privilege of directly speaking to the Immortal One is in itself the pledge of our own immortality in Him.

XII

HUNGER AND THIRST.

(1883)

Religious men have in all times and climes compared the eager yearnings of the soul for righteousness to hunger and thirst. The remarkable difference between the truly religious and the utterly worldly in spirit is the restless and passionate way in which the former are ever engaged in quest of something which to them is of paramount importance; while the latter are content, and even happy, as they absorb themselves in the pursuit of the trivial interests of a busy life. The insatiable thirst of the religious man as against the undisturbed indifference of the man of the world, in matters of religion, is a phenomenon strange but true. While we, too, are painfully conscious of the latter frame of mind, shall we not for a few moments endeavour to realise what the former really signifies ?

To compare a deep longing for righteousness to hunger and thirst is, to our mind, a proof of the keen intelligence and the rare spiritual insight of the great souls of the world. To us, notwithstanding our weak sight and feeble faith, this noble precept interprets itself thus:—

First, religion is not a fashion or a pastime but is a matter of supreme importance, of vital value, to our existence. Some there be who accept religion as a characteristic becoming a well-read man; to some others, of a more emotional nature, religion denotes exciting rites and engaging ceremonies; and to some others, again, of a politic turn of mind, religion is a desirable provision for social order. To all these patrons of religion the truly pious read a profound lesson in this instructive precept—namely, to the sincerely pious religion is imperative and essential, even as hunger and thirst. Religion—sound, regenerating, uplifting faith in God—is no fashion, is not a point of good manners, does not consist in rites and ceremonies,

is something incalculably superior to a utilitarian provision for general welfare. Without an intense sense of God and of His holiness, a full life is unattainable; without the light and the grace of religion, the mind is really unillumined and the heart is truly unhallowed; and the claim of man to be considered 'the glory of the world' is based upon his being essentially a spirit whose food and drink is righteousness. This true religion makes all the difference between real life and virtual death; this true religion distinguishes the angel from the animal. And before we learn implicitly to believe that there is, there can be, no rest, no peace, no satisfaction, no happiness unless and until religion enters into every thought and every feeling, unless and until every moment spent without the consciousness of religion is a waste and a sham, unless and until the absence of an abiding sense of religion becomes a pain and a torture more anguishing than hell—it cannot be said of us that we are truly righteous, that we are

living souls. Righteousness is ever to be hankered after; it is the very sustenance of the soul; it is the first and foremost, indeed the all-absorbing, concern of life. Life without piety is a shell without the kernel, a rind without the core, a skeleton without the heart. Religion is the water of life; it is the true elixir of existence; it is the heavenly nectar of immortality.

The second truth suggested by this precept is that religion should be accorded undivided sovereignty over our lives. It is worse than useless to attempt to serve two masters. Bound to 'double business', life neglects and fails in both. The soul's eye should be single, if light is to enter it The soul should be conscious of no other beauty, if piety is to be its delight. Religion can be regenerating, only when it is accepted as the predominating factor of life. All that we think, say and do should have the sanction and the benediction of righteousness. Nothing is worth seeking, nothing is worth possessing, nothing is worth enjoying, unless it subserves, and

contributes to, the growth of piety in man. To the one lofty aim of true faith and deep piety must be subordinated all the other aims, objects and endeavours of life. Only when the whole heart is possessed with, and the whole soul is absorbed in, the concerns of truth and righteousness, the supreme God blesses us and speeds us in our life-pursuits.

The third lesson conveyed to us by this noble precept is that real religion means eternal endeavour and unlimited progress. In the advancement of our spiritual interests, a halt at any time is fatal. In this holy fight with the powers of the flesh and the world, there can be no truce. The soul's one object is peace, not rest. Eternal progress is man's birth-right. To a really pious soul no degree of progress is sufficient, no stage of growth is final; man's pilgrimage is over a path that is endless; the sacred temple of his worship has countless shrines, one within another of increasing sanctity. Progress—growth and expansion—'through the increasing

ages' is what the soul is capable of and hankers after; and to stop short of the everlasting is virtually to renounce the eternal God. Here the precept of the wise and the holy, the outcome of profound spiritual experience, corroborates the hopes and the longings of our own souls. Utterly imperfect as is our treatment of this great subject, may the gentle reader supplement and improve it with the revelations of the Spirit in his own life!

XIII

PATHITHAPAVANA.

(1883)

Pathithapavana (Purifier of the fallen)—how sweet, how tender, how engaging, how reassuring, is that sacred name of the All-merciful! Consoling, refreshing, inspiring beyond expression it is to think of, to apprehend and to approach the Divine Mother as the Reclaimer of the erratic, the Restorer of the lost, the Purifier of the tainted, the Uplifter of the fallen, the Solacer of the suffering, the Healer of the wounded and the Saviour of the sin-stricken! Painfully conscious of sin and yet too feeble to resist it; lamenting his piteous plight and yet helpless to better his condition; cursing wickedness as detestable and yet caressing it as winsome; shedding bitter tears of regret and yet relishing the tempting poison; loathing vice as a monster with a 'frightful mien' and yet enduring and even embrac-

ing that monster as a charmer—this struggling sinner, this tortured transgresser, this rotten wretch on the rack, what peace, what comfort, what happiness can he command ? He can come to no resolve, he can form no determination, he can put forth no effort, that can be of any use and effect against the apparently invincible force of sin. He can look for relief from no source ; he can hope for succour from no quarter ; he can appeal to no being for rescue. Remedy after remedy he has tried in vain ; endeavour after endeavour has proved futile. Thus he feels like a lonely outcast ; a slave even to what he thoroughly detests and would not wish even unto his worst enemy. Peace and rest, comfort and happiness, appear to be lost for ever ; and his only lot seems to be eternal perdition. But unto him, sunk in this deep despair, comes the soothing, the cheering, the revivifying good-news that the Almighty One is sure to help and uplift him, that Supreme Being before whose face no enemy dare stand, at

whose very gaze man's apparently indomitable enemies of impurity, worldliness and sin vanish away as mist. How unutterably blessed this miserable man, in his pitiable plight, feels, as the heavenly hope enters his soul that a new star will rise in his heart, a reverse tide will set up in his life, and his torturing grief will yield place to healing happiness. He feels as though snatched from the very jaws of death; he is roused with courage and strength to meet and vanquish his old enemies; he experiences a sure hope that sin will be reduced to dust and ashes and on those ruins will rise the stately edifice of pure morality and true religion. Like a balmy breeze refreshing the drooping frame, like a charming voice cheering the heavy heart, like a vernal shower bringing the vital sap to the withering plant, like the silvery stream imparting life and strength to the weary hart, and like the shining star guiding the bewildered wayfarer lost in gloom, this life-giving thought, this hope-imparting belief that

there is a heavenly Purifier of the fallen invigorates and rejuvenates the sore-struggling, half-sinking sinner; who thus feels nerved to a new fight with the frightful foes that have so long held him down. He is, as it were, endowed with a new heart and gifted with a new strength; and he feels his future is secure. Thus this firm faith in the holy Healer, the potent Purifier, the sure Saviour, is at once hope and strength, peace and power, unto him who, wrung with anguish, knew not how and whence relief could come.

Besides the sinner, aware of his appalling fate but helpless to avert it, there are others unto whom the Purifier of the fallen is an inexhaustible source of hope and strength. Is it not the common experience of most of us that, fighting hard against temptations and passions, we were often pushed to the very brink of the abyss, and a fall was almost inevitable; but the saving thought, the redeeming belief, that the great Restorer ever helps those who help themselves, worked like a charm, filled

us with hope irrepressibly strong and power immeasurably great—a hope and a power that led us on from victory to victory? Thus the happy remembrance that there is the great Purifier of the fallen, whose heart knows no fatigue and whose helping hand is never withheld, is a magic incentive to face the foe undauntedly and to fight the battle confidently. This faith is a shield against the arrows of temptation, a sword for beating back the attacks of passions. If the Divine Saviour is so tender and helpful to him who knows yet errs, who detests his sins and yet indulges in them, how much more would He befriend and strengthen one who strains every nerve in fighting those common foes of man—temptations and passions! Again, this belief in the Purifier of the fallen immensely adds to the firm faith of the loyal servant. That God is the All-merciful One who cherishes boundless love even for the transgresser, goes in search of the lost man, pardons and purifies and places in the right path him who has sin-

ned against his own Lord and Father—can any man perceive this truth and not feel impelled to love, adore and obey that All-merciful One with the whole heart, soul and strength? To realise God as the great Purifier, the gracious Sanctifier, is to be irresistibly led to revere Him and bow down before Him in awe and reverence. Lastly, the Purifier of the fallen is as the right arm of might unto those who, pressing hard towards their own destination, feel it a part of their mission in life to aid others in reaching their goal. He who believes that there is one potent Reclaimer of all the refractory will also believe that his own hands will be strengthened, his own efforts will be reinforced, as he faithfully employs them for the uplift of others; and he is stimulated and encouraged to work with redoubled energy for the redemption and salvation of his sisters and brethren. The Purifier of the fallen is the guarantee that all earnest endeavours will be ultimately crowned with successs. Will the gentle reader

develope and complete this very imperfect exposition of the sweetest, the loveliest, the loftiest of all God's sublime attributes?

SERVICES
AND
SERMONS.

XIV

SERVICE *

with Sermon on

SADHANA : ITS MEANING AND METHOD.

(1922)

UDBODHANA.

Hymn— *Adimadhyanthamulondanivadu* (Telugu).

Om ! Parabrahmane Namah ! We salute and bow down before the Supreme One. We prostrate ourselves with the reverence, with the adoring obeisance, of the spirit before Him, the Supreme Spirit. Not the servile submission from fear, not the prudent and calculating praise for profit, not even the grateful acknowledgment and avowal of indebtedness and obligation ; but truly and purely it is the devout prostration of reverence aud love before the All-holy and the All-clement. This is our high -est duty, our rarest privilege, our keen-

*At the 10th anniversary celebration of the Cocanada Brahma Sadhanasramam (25-12-22).

est happiness, our surest salvation. The whole universe, as one organic and articulated system, joins with us, as we thus humble ourselves in spirit before Him, the Supreme Spirit. Not there, not here, not then, not now, but everywhere and always, truly this universe is a sacred shrine where the Lord's worshippers and adorers offer united and unbroken worship unto Him, the only Lord. Shall we not rejoice with all the ecstatic bliss of the heart and the soul that, while in no way fenced off from the rest of the world, we are yet in the sacred presence of our God, in the sweet embrace of our beloved Parent? Let us be filled, let us be through and through thrilled and pulsated, with the felt presence of our own dear God. How the heart yearns and longs for Him! Oh, the terrific recollection of separation—how it harrows us as it recalls the pang, the torture, that we suffer when we are separated from Him! But as this blessed opportunity is mercifully granted, shall we not, in complete self-forgetfulness, in utter self-abnegation,

in absolute self-surrender, cast ourselves into His arms, to throb with the joy of restoration and to be transported with the ecstasy of reunion? If we have hitherto striven and endeavoured to any purpose, if our *sadhana* has any aim and use, it must prove and manifest itself even now in holy communion with our Lord. Why waste words when the heart is swelling and surging with the desire and the expectation of meeting and adoring its Spouse Divine?

ARADHANA.

How shall I name Thee? But why this madness of presuming to name Thee, the Nameless? No name is needed, no description is wanted, to tell our hearts what Thou art unto us. In fact, how oppressive is the sense of fear lest, in making a futile attempt to name Thee, we should lose the quickening touch of Thy Holy Spirit! All names, however carefully selected, are a veil and a mist between Thee and us. Thou the Nameless, Un-nameable, most dear One of our hearts! As we fold Thee to our hearts and as we feel drawn to Thy

heart, what intrusion that we should word our joy, name our bliss? We feel even now that Thou art enshrined in us as the dearest, sweetest, mightiest, holiest One, the absolutely perfect One; and we bow down before Thee in reverent joy. In the beginning Thou didst abide in Thine own undifferentiated unity; but Thou didst, in Thy love and mercy, prefer to be figured forth in manifold and multiplied creation, and Thou didst again deign to re-integrate the whole of Thy limitless creation into the recess and embrace of Thine own undivided singleness. We are but the visionaries of the fleeting phenomena, we perceive only the shadows. But, by Thy grace and mercy, as the eyes are closed, the heart is opened; as the senses are sealed up, the spirit within is unveiled; and we behold Thee behind the phenomena, beyond the shadows, as the One Eternal Reality; and we rejoice that thus we are led even by Thee into the Holy of Holies. There, in the immost shrine of Thine eternal presence, what are we, where are we, except

as mere glimpses and as surface-expressions of Thy profound reality ? As Thou hast in Thy mercy taken us thus far, do Thou grant that even the semblance of difference, even the mere appearance of separateness, may fade away, and Thou be all-in-all. That is the end and fulfilment, the culmination and triumph, of this life which Thou hast vouchsafed unto us : to know nought but Thee and to delight in nought but Thee. But are we to rejoice that we are thus transfigured ? No; we rejoice that *Thou* hast been thus glorified. We are here only to reflect Thy glory, to emit Thy radiance and to transmit Thy sweetness. May we have no separate existence ! We detest even the faintest desire for a separate being. May we be blended and blessed in this complete resumption into Thee ! This is our humble prayer. Do Thou most mercifully vouchsafe it. Blessed be Thy name !

PRARDHANA.

Hymn—*Thumahoprabhuchandra* (Hindi)

Thou the Lord of my heart, the Charmer

of my heart, the Beloved One of my heart, what words can describe the pang of separation from Thee? How the heart longs and yearns, is tortured with the desire for Thee! The whole world is a dreary desert, if Thy face is concealed from me; my life is a heavy infliction, if it is not inspired and cheered by Thy grace and Thy voice. In these many ways I bemoan my separation, I weep over my desertion. As we have sung, so we sigh; for a single drop of Thy mercy do we pray and do we yearn. Oh! Thy *amritham*, Thy *amritham*, Thy nectar, Thy nectar, the nectar of *Thy* sweet name, do Thou grant unto me. Parched, roasted, burnt up, the heart can know what peace, what rest? Thou alone canst refresh and revive it. Do Thou shed one drop, a single drop, of Thy grace upon this forlorn one. Then refreshed and revivified, my heart shall spring into life and into joy, and praise and glorify Thee, the Beloved One. I beseech and supplicate this only blessing, that Thou shouldst shed a single drop of Thy grace upon this wholly

wretched, utterly miserable, piteously widowed heart. How, how, how can I draw Thee in ? Who but Thee could feel any pity, who but Thee could spare any compassion, for this helpless and prostrate creature? Wilt Thou neglect me, wilt Thou reject me, wilt Thou desert me ? Whither can I possibly go, where can I possibly reside, where can I possibly shelter myself, if Thou forsake me ? I cannot advance any claim, I cannot urge any right, that I should receive Thy compassion. I can only appeal and implore. As the fulfilment of Thy compassion, as the consummation of Thy mercy, as the triumph of Thy grace, do Thou compassionate me, do Thou cast Thy mercy upon me, do Thou impart Thy grace unto me, that I may sing forth in joy and praise, 'I *have* the Lord and I have *all*.' This is my humble prayer. Do Thou mercifully vouchsafe it. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name !

Hymn—*Neeve gathiyani nammithimi* (Telugu)

That is the sum and substance of our

supplication unto Thee. We have been taught by Thee to consider ourselves and to esteem ourselves as Thy children. Thou hast further revealed to us the privilege, the honour, the glory of being humble, lowly but none-the-less heaven-chosen instruments of Thy purpose and Thy providence; and we seek to realise Thee as the Ocean of Mercy. With mercy do Thou employ us; for mercy do Thou shape us; and into mercy do Thou absorb us. Thou art verily the Ocean of Mercy. Unto Thy mercy what impertinence to think of limit or end? Every drop in the deep ocean is Thy crystal mercy. Every ray from the glorious orb of day is Thy effulgent mercy. Every star in the expansive firmament is Thy beaming mercy. Every flower that makes the earth an Eden is Thy fragrant mercy. Every lisp of the innocent babe fresh from Thy bosom is Thy cheering mercy. Every look of confidence and trust from eye to eye is Thy unifying mercy. Every word of genuine insight, wherever spoken, is the gospel of Thy own illumi-

nating mercy. Every so-called obstacle, now a hindrance, anon a triumph, is Thy own reassuring mercy. All so-called calumny or vilification is only Thy own purifying and invigorating mercy. Every beat of the heart, with its push and its pause, is the pendulum-swing of Thy recurring mercy, now advancing into sight and then receding into secrecy. Every heave of the breath signifies a two-fold mercy—Thy in-coming, life-bringing and Thy out-going, refuse-removing mercy. Thou art the Ocean of Mercy. And we cast ourselves into it with absolute satisfaction as children of mercy. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou now and for ever!

UPADESAMU.

Thou, the Indweller, the Oracle in every heart, the Torch-bearer before every pilgrim, the Path-finder for every humble wayfarer! These, Thine own children, my dear sisters and brothers, have desired that, on this auspicious day, even this confirmed, hardened sinner should bear testimony to the ceaseless yearning of the Divine

Mother for each one of Her children. Not the healthy but the sickly, not the affluent but the needy, not the faithful but the prodigal can tell how eager, careful, watchful, interested, intensely solicitous is the Mother. Thus even unto me, the ignorant, the erring, the blemished, the tarnished, the fallen, the abject, is granted the occasion to be able, from pure personal experience, to say, 'Thou art, Thou livest, Thou abidest for ever as the eternal Mother of all.' Do Thou grant that on this occasion a word, a single word, uttering Thine own eternal truth, might find its way to the hearts of these sisters and brothers, even through the soiled lips and the sullied heart of this reprobate sinner. Do Thou grant that, like the sun shining through the densest clouds, like the rose scenting through the thickest brambles, like the stream rippling up from the lowest abyss, one word of truth might well up even from this abased heart, just as it is Thy word, Thy sweet word, Thy sovereign word, Thy sanctifying word, Thy immortal word,

Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou for ever! Sisters and brothers,

Truly the All-holy is to be praised and glorified that He has so mercifully enabled us to be here to celebrate this anniversary day, the returning day of recollections and of rejoicings on account of our *Sadhanasramam*. What shall I utter, what shall I place before you, which you do not know? Yet I may remind you of the central purpose, I may recall to your minds in one word the inmost aim and object, of the Institution.

It is said that, in the early days of Mahammedan inroads into this country, a certain town was sacked by Mahammedan troops; and as was the practice then, a rush was made towards the temple, that it might be pulled down as a sort of tribute and honour to the Lord of hosts who had given the Islamic arms the victory of the day. There was a priestess attached to the temple. She ran in, embraced the idol, pressed it to her bosom, held it close to her heart, clung to it with the utmost

confidence and trust; and she did not mind the other consequences. The troops came, ran into the holy place, and saw the woman holding fast tenaciously to the idol. They wanted to separate her from the object of her attachment and then pull down what to them was an abomination. But the woman would not let go her hold. She must live or perish with it. In helplessness and disgust, the men thought the only way to accomplish the purpose of demolishing the idol was to put an end to the woman. Under the commander's order, a soldier drew out his sword and cut off the head of the woman. It is said that, as the blood gushed out, every drop of it wore the form of the god, of the idol, she worshipped. Every drop of the blood in her body was thus shaped into the image of the object of her worship. Her assassins felt astonished at this wonderful transformation in the very physical system of the woman. The wisest of the band rightly reflected: "Leave alone her errors; hers is the faith that transforms the devotee

into the Deity." That is the end and goal of our *sadhana*—to make and shape the devotee into the image of the Deity, that naught may remain of his own self. As Maeterlinck has said, the great secret, the final mystery, of the universe is that the *substance* of all is one and that substance is not matter but spirit. The substance of all is one; only its manifestation is in myriad forms. But we very often mistake the forms for the substance, and thus we mislead ourselves and misjudge others; we mislead ourselves in making the passing phenomena permanent landmarks, and again, we misjudge others by magnifying the chance incident of the moment into an eternal characteristic of the soul. If we would know the true meaning of life, if our *sadhana* is to bear good fruit, if, in fact, the purpose of creation is to be realised, we should strive, ceaselessly, ardently, and with the hunger and thirst of an irrepressible passion, strive for the realisation of the one supreme end of our life, namely, to transform the devotee into the Deity.

Just for a moment let us realise this purpose of creation; and we shall, as a matter of sheer logical necessity, be driven to the conclusion that *such* is the duty and *such* the occupation that have been assigned unto us. The purpose of creation is even this—the self-realisation of the Supreme Spirit. As the oldest of our national scriptures has said, He in His undivided unity dwelt from beginningless time till in His immortal love He decided: "I am One; I shall be many, that the many might be incorporated and integrated once again, re-assumed, into the One." Thus the outgoing God, the out-ranging God, the returning God, the realised God;—that is the object of all *sadhana*. The end and aim of all *sadhana* is: How to leap out of the illusion of 'the many' and reach out into the spotless pure vision of 'the One,' *Ekamevadvitheeyam*. As we perceive this supreme truth—the self coming out of the Self and ranging forth as the self, and coming back into the Self to be the Eternal Self—as we realise this process as the divine purpose

of creation, a process which construes the complete cycle of cosmic life as a four-fold self-presentation of the Deity as the Progenitor, the Protector, the Perfector and the Perpetuator (to adopt the terminology of the first verse of our congregational chant, *goshti prardhana*)—as we read the universe in this light, we understand why *sadhana* has been prescribed, not as a process of mere spiritual gymnastics, not as a system of self-help, but as the pilgrim's progress along the everlasting path unto the eternal goal. If only we thus address ourselves in the proper spirit, according to the right method, to this ceaseless quest of the Eternal One, how in a single moment we feel we are transformed! This so-called fleshly body, with its encumbrance of bone and muscle and skin and what not, becomes the holy temple in which the Spirit is enshrined; and, as one keen-sighted thinker suggests, when we touch the human body with the right sentiment, we really touch the hem of His garment, the sacred garb of the Divine. Aye, the whole

universe is, as Goethe has said, the live-garment woven at the loom of time to half-reveal and half-conceal, as through a translucent veil, the adorable Indweller. All earth is holy ground; every object is a 'theophany', a suggestive token of God; all occupations are sacred engagements; every moment reckons a 'heart-beat' responsive to His Love. This conception of life gives unto us, on the one hand, the amplest opportunity to render back devoutly unto Him, though in a soiled state all the talents He has deposited in us; and, on the other hand, it brings us into the closest contact with the Spirit, as it indwells and permeates this marvellous creation. Man the imaged idea of God; God the indwelling Spirit of man—where is the cleavage; what becomes, after that, of all the divisions, of all the clashes and conflicts, with which we stultify ourselves and frustrate the purposes of life? One tender smile of affection from the devoted heart to the Eternal Beloved, and one sweet note of response from the Eternal Lover back

to the expectant heart—thus the Supreme Lord becomes alike the prompter and the fulfiller, the source and the gratification of all the joys of life. His outgoing is the manifest world; His home-returning is the ideal world. To realise this is the end of *sadhana*. And it has been enjoined on us even by our own God as a task, not imposed by extraneous compulsion, but induced within us for our own weal; so that we *practise* this *sadhana* for the healthy growth of our souls and not avoid it as a curb on the freedom of life. The aim and purpose of it all is to behold the glory of God here and now, within and without us. If we thus feel, through God's grace, encircled, embraced with the glory of His presence, there is but one sentiment that the heart cherishes after that blessed experience—the sentiment of thankful joy, of joyful thanksgiving. Dear God, is this what Thou hast designed and provided for me—to see Thee, to perceive Thee, to feel the touch of Thee everywhere and always? If this is Thy purpose, how prosaic is the

description which says, "Thy purposes are good"! Nay, Thy intentions and purposes are *Godly* and partake of Thy divine nature. Thou dost, every minute of eternal time, work out the purposes of reporting Thyself, reaffirming Thyself, reproducing Thyself, reincarnating Thyself through the whole universe, through every mote and monad, through every atom and animalcule. There is Thy joy, blessedness, bliss, ecstasy, *anandam*, as well as there is Thy truth, reality, *satyam*—the transformation of humanity into Divinity. That is the end of *sadhana*.

How shall we practise it, how put ourselves into the normal mood and posture for it? There are many ways in which this is expressed. But, after all, the many ways resolve themselves into one single way, namely, to say, "Think not of thyself, think only of the Lord. No will of Thine, only the purposes of the Lord"; and again to say, "Thy will is mine". In Narada's *Bhakti Sutras*, those who adore God are divided into four classes. God is sym-

bolised as the King; and it is said, the King has four classes of persons around and about Him: first, those who enter into His councils—the wise; second, those who serve Him—the philanthropic; third, those who entertain Him—the good-natured; the fourth class have no name: "the others" they are called. These last have no recommendation; they possess no special characteristic; they function in no capacity; they render no service to the King; they are useful in no way to him; and they are called 'dependents'. They have to get their all from the pure bounty of the Lord. They are *bhaktas*. They receive everything from God; and they have nothing to give in return. That is the position of the mind, that is the attitude of the heart, that is the peculiar state of the soul to which *sadhana* leads us. We are 'the others' that have no name. What pretensions have we to that wisdom which enters into His councils? What possessions have we to subserve His providence? What traits of good nature have we to entertain Him?

We are 'the others', the 'dependents', the *bhaktas*, owing our all to Him and saying and feeling always, "I am nought: Thou art everything". It is only thus the stub-born separate self is annihilated. That is the true *Nirvana* in which the egoistic self is so eliminated that the Supreme One is All-in-all and shines forth in His radiant and enrapturing beauty. "Annihilate your-self, that you may have salvation;" says a renowned Sufi, "when you go away, Truth (*haq*, *satyam*) will be seated in your place".

Does that take away from man's moral responsibility? No. But it only adds the spiritual confession that what I do is giv-en me to do for His pleasure: *hithayalo-kasyathavapriyardham*. It abates not a single jot of moral responsibility; it only trans-mutes the formal, moral obligation into a quickening, enchanting spiritual exalta-tion. It is not that there is no distinction of good and bad; but in God's creation bad has no real place, for good is all-in-all: not that the distinction between good and

bad is denied ; but the distinction is obviated by the elimination of bad. No doubt, there is the old, puzzling question of the *will*. "Our wills are ours to make them Thine," declares the great poet. Yet that is only the language of the well-ordered moral life, not of the well-beloved devout life—of reverential submission, not of entranced embrace—of Mary caressing the feet, not of Meerabai lost in the love-light, of the Lord. "What have I to do with owning a will and training it?" says the *bhakta*," Who am I that I should 'donate' a will to the Lord? There is no will save 'His Will'. 'I will'—that is the prerogative of Him alone who could avow, 'I am'. The rest is all the *leela*—the divine delight —of the Lord." It may be true that a man without a will is a 'machine'. But it may also be true that the devotion which recognises, provides a place for, no will but "His Will," flowers into a 'messiah.'

Thus the end of *sadhana* is God. The motive of *sadhana* is truth. The range of *sadhana* is the whole universe. The method of *sa-*

dhana is the practice of "His Will" and "His Presence." For this is the end and aim ordained unto us by God. May He, in His infinite mercy, accomplish His purpose in us all, His own children !

ASEESH.

Thou art the end and aim of our lives. And how wofully erring we should be, if for a moment we lost sight of the only end and aim of our lives ! Where can we go, whither can we deflect, without somehow once again being brought into line with Thy plans and purposes ? Here is Thy unfailing providence in that it prevails over all our deflections, adjusts all our aberrations and dovetails all our deviations into one unifying, all-inclusive, all-foreseeing, all-saving purpose. Thou art Mercy, Love, Grace itself, free Grace itself, pure Grace itself !

My beloved God ! As I experience the sweetness of love, the charm of mercy, the beauty of grace, I bow down before Thee, the God of love ; I bow down before Thee, the God of mercy ; I bow down before

Thee, the God of grace. This is a day of so many holy covenants; and we are again here to reaffirm all covenants with Thee: our mind's covenant of faithful, earnest quest of Thee; our heart's covenant of single-eyed, passionate love for Thee; our conscience' covenant of dauntless, selfless avowal of duty towards Thee; our soul's covenant of undivided, pure and holy adoration unto Thee; our body's covenant of willing, cheerful service unto Thee; the covenant as regards all that we call our own, all that we hold dear and near to us, to fit into, to harmonise and co-operate with, the best in Thy creation; the covenant of our mutual recognition in and through Thee, as of Thy household. All these covenants we are here to reaffirm on this holy spot, on this sacred day. Do Thou put into us that sincerity of mind, that fidelity of heart, that veneration of conscience, that consecration of spirit, that abnegation of will, that dedication of the body which we ought to render unto Thee now and for ever. Bless these, Thy child-

ren—not that Thou art slow to bless but because we are so tardy to be blessed. Make us eager, alert to be blessed. And even as we are thus blessed in Thee, may that bountiful blessing reach forth into Thy whole creation! And thus may the whole creation be blessed in Thee and Thou blessed of it, now and for ever! May this little, tiny little harbour, haven, shrine that we hold dear as the *Ashramam*, may that for ever be made sacred with Thine own effulgent presence! And may all that are harboured in it, all that are interested in it, all that wish well of it, be blessed with the blessing of Thine own direct presence and intimate companionship! Thus Thy kingdom be established and Thy love abide supreme; thus mayst Thou, the Lord of Righteousness, be the sole Sovereign from the beginning to the close of time, from end to end of illimitable space; thus mayst Thou be all-in-all and we find our all-in-all in Thee! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou now and for ever!

Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

XV

SERVICE:

THE HUMAN HEART THE HOLIEST TEMPLE.

(1905)

ARADHANA.

Hymn—*Akhilabrahmandapathi* (Bengali)

Lord of myriad worlds! Lord of countless seas and oceans deep! All bowing to Thee; all held in the hollow of Thy hand, Lord! Supreme Master! Sole Sovereign! Thou art the only everlasting Protector and Purveyor unto these myriad worlds! We, too, prostrate ourselves before Thy majesty. In this little world, tiny atoms, mere dust-grains as we are, we yet hold the sweetest communion of brotherly fellowship will all, even through Thy grace, out of Thy sole fatherhood of all. Unknown yet felt, unseen yet realised, in Thy marvellous methods, Thou hast knit together the denizens of these countless orbs by one family tie, ruled by one law of love, designed for one destiny of a divine

purpose, and led on by one gleam of heavenly light. We feel that, at this hour of worship, we are a congregation, a family, a fraternity, at one with the holy band of worshippers congregating in the spacious temple of this universe. The dumb creatures and the so-called lifeless objects —they, too, dance and participate in the hymn, the symphony, the celestial harmony of heart-worship. Aye, the whole universe is wonderfully attuned into one united hosanna in praise of Thee. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou!

At this hour of worship, we feel that we are all spirit, wholly Thine, entirely transformed into sonship, child-ship unto Thee. This gift of love, this blessed boon of adoring sonship, ends all our sorrows, dispels all our fears, removes all our infirmities and marvellously regenerates us into devoted and trusting servants of Thee, our own dear Lord. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name!

A humble little band of worshipping spirits in the universal congregation of hearts,

we beseech Thy in-coming grace on us. Come, our own dear, ever-adorable God. Here we have met to lay bare our hearts, to disburden our griefs and sorrows, to confess our sins and transgressions, to disclose our faults and frailties, to own our endless gratitude, to be enriched with the gifts of Thy mercy, to be transformed by the might of Thy grace into newer life, fresher aspirations and firmer resolutions. Do Thou descend, in Thy mercy and Thy grace into our hearts. We seek not the gifts of the world. Here, there, everywhere they lie in inexhaustible abundance, provided in Thy providence, fore-arranged in Thy prevision even before we needed them or took thought of them. We desire to grow into Thee, we seek to put on Thee more and more, to imbibe Thee, to be infused, instilled, suffused, surcharged with the spirit of Thy holiness. Here we come with that thirst, with that yearning, with that joint petition; that is our combined supplication, that is our united prayer at Thy footstool. May we be drunk with the nectar,

the indescribable, the unutterable ecstasy of Thy companionship, Thy presence, Thine own charming, enrapturing presence. Touch us ; do grant us to feel Thy touch Unseal our eyes; remove the scales of ignorance and cast down the barriers of sin. Open the gates of our hearts and disclose Thyself. Sages have sung that Thou art the *Viswapathi*. Thy glory is manifested, Thy radiance flames forth. Thy music thrills the world with raptures. Thy mercy showers down the ambrosia of joy and peace and love. Yet we need and long for Thee as the dear God of each one of us—embraced, beloved, adored, enchanting, enrapturing, transporting. Alone with the Alone, possessed with Thee, detached from the world, each one of us would have Thee unto himself. Yet we are all here, believing in spiritual fellowship, to enjoy Thee together. How to make that possible Thou alone knowest. Ours is to ask, Thine to grant ; ours is to pray, Thine to vouchsafe ; ours is to supplicate, Thine to bless. Have mercy ; have mercy ; have mercy !

We rejoice to sing They praise, not that Thou needest it, not that we offer it as a homage or even as a confirmation of our allegiance to Thee, but wholly because the heart is prompted and the soul is impelled to it. We feel we must sing Thy name even as therefrom comes the exalting experience of the vivid preception and the sanctifying inspiration of Thy holy presence. Thou are the prime Truth, the vital Fact, the imperishable Reality, the enduring Essence of this vast, illimitable universe. Thou art the sum and substance, the spirit and strength, the stay and support, the all-in-all, of all that we see. And yet how we dupe ourselves with hollw shows and deluding conventions, hide-bound by customary routines and traditional formalities! Thou art the Indweller of this whole called the universe: as the sages have sung. All that exists is inspired, enveloped, permeated, suffused, transfused by Thee. Thou art the staying strength below; Thou art the hovering grace above; Thou art the enveloping breath around. In this en-

crusted globe below and in those beckoning stars above; in the solemn quiet of the night and in the vivifying light of the down, we behold Thy abiding presence. Incalculably rich, indescribably varied and yet marvellously harmonised, this universe is the manifestation of Thy power, wisdom, goodness and holiness. We live in the expansive temple of this world. In the hardness of that which resists, in the softness of that which soothes, in the geniality of the sunshine which awakens new hope in the heart, in the revolving cycle of the seasons which bring tokens of Thy ceaseless mercy, in the unfailing fidelity of the earth's movement and rotation suggestive of the permanence of Thy purpose, even as it is sustained by Thy love, we behold Thee. In the throbs of the heart, in the pricks of conscience, in the commanding sense of duty, in all these we behold Thee. Thy sovereign Will reigns, Thy awe-inspiring Presence beams forth, everywhere. All laws are the expressions of Thy eternal truth, even as all love is the outpour-

ing of Thy inexhaustible affection from the central fountain. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou!

With our bodies, with our minds, with our souls, with all our powers and faculties, with all our intuitions and endeavours, with the science of the sages, with the history of the ages, with the minstrels' chants and the artists' "witcheries," with all these we glorify Thee as the Eternal Reality. In Thee as the all-embracing Unity, we feel unified. Thus we are all one—one to know Thee, one to love Thee, one to abide in Thee, one to rejoice in Thee, one to tender the offering of song and the homage of service unto Thee, one in eternally adoring, endeavouring and working with all our thoughts and desires and deeds, in perfect unison with Thee. Thou hast granted unto us countless occasions to perceive and to realise that we are all one in Thee as the true, eternal God. We are privileged to worship Thee. Unto us has been vouchsafed the supreme right of calling Thee our Father and praising Thee as

the only adorable God, the sole Object of our hearts' longing and of our souls' adoration. We rejoice in this privilege and render grateful thanks unto Thee. The world calls Thee Infinite. But we feel that it is a word all too poor to represent Thy amplitude, Thy altitude, Thy illimitable, inconceivably surpassing greatness and grandeur. Yet Thy mercy comes down, Thy grace descends, Thy condescending clemency enters into our tiny hearts. Therein lie alike Thy real greatness and our sure hope—the pledge that we are of Thee, the guarantee that Thou shalt be with us for ever. We thank Thee for this holy union that never can cease and nowhere can terminate.

Oh Thou supremely holy God! We bow down before Thee and we render our hearts unto Thee. Teach us, we beseech Thee, to realise Thee, to receive Thee, to embrace Thee, to make the heart of each one of us an abode vast enough, a home sweet enough, a shrine sacred enough unto Thy Holy Spirit. Even as the entire solicitude

and untiring vigilance of the devoted, loving wife is applied to the sole end of engaging the love of her adored spouse, we would so address all our prayers, so direct all our desires and so engage all our intentions and purposes as to achieve the one object of receiving Thee and securing Thee as the abiding and enchanted God in our hearts and souls. Teach us, we beseech Thee, how to cleanse and purify, how to illumine and adorn, how to beautify and sanctify our hearts and souls that Thou mayest deign to enter them. All the world's charm of light and colour and fragrance we would gather into our hearts that Thou, our best Beloved, mayest accept them as the favourite retreats of Thy love. All sacred places, all sanctified altars, all consecrated temples, we would translate into our souls that Thou mayest abide in them as Thy holy shrines. All the sages that "vision" Thee; all the saints that enjoy Thee ; all the sinners that, like ourselves, through the gloom and the weariness of sin and sorrow, supplicate Thee for relief

and regeneration; all the prophets that gaze through the mysteries of Thy greatness and the marvels of Thy mercy; all the devotees enraptured into dance and song by the charms of Thy beauty—all, all we embrace and welcome into our hearts that Thou mayest be befittingly habited in them. Teach us, we implore Thee, to render our hearts and souls into mansions and minsters worthy of Thee. Teach us thus to commune with Thee, to be absorbed in rapturous contemplation of Thee. Glance meeting glance, touch thrilling with touch, love embracing love, may we thus commune with Thee directly, immediately, personally! Grant unto us this beatitude, we beseech Thee, our hearts' Love and our souls' Lord!

DHYANAMU.

(Congregational Chant.)

PRARDHANA.

Bhavambodhipotham saranyamvrajamah!

Verily Thou art the Ferryman across. As Thy devotees have sung with myriad-organed music, Ferryman, take us across;

Ferryman, take us across—not from this to the next world, not from near earth to distant heaven, not from the stale old to the tempting new, not from ours to not-ours, not from man to God ; but across that tremendous chasm that yawns within our own selves. Carry us across passion and sin; ferry us across the gulfs of temptations and struggles, steer us through the storms of evil and sin, even to the haven of truth, light and life. Unto Thee, the unerring Ferryman across, we appeal. Lead us out of untruth into truth, lead us out of darkness into light, lead us out of death into life. Thou the almighty, all-conquering, awe-inspiring One, do Thou, with the radiance of Thy glory, with the charm of Thy beauty, reveal Thyself in our hearts and renew us with Thy eternal love. We bless Thee and we seek to be blessed in Thee. We glorify Thy name!

ANUTHAPAMU.

And shall it be all prayer and supplication to be cared for and taken across ? Shall we not, in Thy presence, tear asun-

der all our foolish desires, fond lingerings and frail leanings towards the cravings of the flesh and the allurements of the world? Shall we not sacrifice before Thee, even as the proofs and pledges of our sincere self-surrender unto Thee, our pet passions, our fond fashions, our absorbing ambitions, our secret schemes, our insatiable indulgences? Shall we not trust into Thy hands all our concerns and interests? Shall we not say unto Thee, with unalloyed sincerity and soul-deep devotion, "Let Thy will be done"?

Long have we foolishly run and sought after the vain things of the world. Not that we would now be shielded and saved from what are called the trials of life; but we would seek the incoming of Thy spirit into all the concerns of our life; that thus the old, irksome responsibilities may become new, quickening obligations, our self-imposed tasks may become Thy divine ordinances, the vows of our renunciation may become the mandates of Thy mercy, and the associations of our establishing

may become alliances in Thy Holiness; that thus the old home may become the new sanctuary, the old companions may become new co-pilgrims, the old society may become the new fraternity, the old world may become the new temple, the old pursuits may become new missions, the old recreations may become new enjoyments; that thus the food we suppose we earn may become the love come from the Mother's hand, and the clothing we fancy we acquire may become the garb of mercy that the Mother casts upon us; that thus the old pledges may become new covenants, the old intuitions may become new and God-ordained aspirations; that thus our whole life may be transfigured into a happy communion with the living, loving God all the days and all the years of our lives! Do Thou tear away, even with the thoroughness that true love demands, all that is deep-rooted in us of vice and sin, iniquity and immorality, debasing lust and degrading desire! Do Thou, with unsparing chastisement, purge out all that lurks

within our hearts, with hydra-headed persistence, of worldliness, selfishness, cupidity, prejudice, passion, anger, hatred, lust and licentiousness. May we be taught to know and feel, and rejoice in the knowledge and the feeling, that of Thee is our true freedom, fromThee is our true happiness, unto Thee is our true progress! Thus may our lives ever tend and grow toward Thee, and in Thee alone may we find our home, station, place, position—the only success and reward of life ! Thus in the amplitude of love, in the keenness of brotherhood, in the impartiality of truth, in the sincerity of good faith, may we be enabled to live our lives in Thee—transparent as a crystal, deep as the ocean, firm as a rock, yet soft and gentle as the dew that descends to refresh and the light that enters to cheer! May we be Thy servants, worshippers, workers, devotees, consecrated unto Thy purposes, dedicated unto Thy glory, seeking nought but Thy will, working for nought but the weal of Thy children ! Thy truth prevail! Thy love reign su-

preme! Thy kingdom come! Thy name be glorified everywhere and through all ages! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou now and for ever!

ASEESH.

The Lord of all light lead us! The Lord of all truth illumine us! The Lord of all mercy protect us! The Lord of all grace sanctify us! May the all-holy Lord dwell in us and reign over us! Blessed be the name of the Lord now and for ever!

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!
Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

XVI

SERVICE:*

'DEATH THE HEART OF LIFE.'

(1916)

UDBODHANA.

Praise and adoration, thanks and salutations, unto Him, the Supreme One, the Refuge of all worlds, the Home and Haven of all souls, the Pilot across the depths of sorrow and suffering, and the Welcomer into the vast Beyond of hope and joy! Blessed be His name! Unto Him be glory that He is endlessly, boundlessly, all-comprehensively, all-embracingly welling up and coming down in incessant and inexhaustible life! He is the spring-source, the fountain-head, of life. He is the ceaseless current, the ever-flowing. flood, the ever-expanding vastness of life He is the profound deep, the fathomless ocean, of life. We spring from Him; we hold our course through Him; we find our close, our fulfilment, in Him; we for ever abide in Him. We are wholly of Him, in

*In *Memoriam*: Mr. P. Seetharamayya (4-1-1916)

Him and unto Him; we are His offspring, the direct issue of His ever-creative Being. He is the God of the living. He is the Adored of those that for ever abide in hope. He is not the distant author but the very vital, direct substance and essence of our life. He is the reality, He is the primal fact, of which we are but the expression, the manifestation, the outcome. Here we are in seemingly separate yet intimate and incorporate affinity and filial association and holy companionship with Him. And thus we are prompted to turn to Him, to look up to Him, to hold converse with Him and to confide all our needs and wants, all our cravings and desires, unto Him. Him do we first seek, Him do we first appeal to, in all our needs, in all our trials and in all our afflictions; and by His grace are we comforted and strengthened. Him do we first think of in all our doings; Him do we first bless in all our joys and felicitations. He is unto us the inexhaustible fund of life, the inalienable friend and companion through life and be-

yond life. He holds us by the hand and leads us along His path, sheds the blessings of His light on us and awakens in our hearts the faith that so readily perceives what pure happiness it is to believe in Him, to trust in Him, to confide all our secrets unto Him. How shall we forget Him in the day of trial, how can we ignore Him in the day of triumph? He is the Being unto whom we owe our all; He is our first quest; He is our prime confidant; He is our ever-faithful friend; He is our ever-trusted consellor; He is our ever-reliable guide. Unto Him we turn this day, turn that we may, by His grace, be granted the vision to glimpse light through gloom, to receive comfort through tears, to hear messages of hope through wailings of grief, to taste the sweetness of love amidst the bitterness of parting, and to hold by unshakable faith despite the tearing, convulsive groans of bereavement. Wonderful are the means which He, in His mercy and wisdom, adopts to undeceive us, to disclose unto us the secrets of

life, to lay bare unto us the realities veiled behind the appearances of the common day and, in seeming to enwrap us in the sable folds of death, to lead us into that inner shrine where He reveals Himself in all the effulgence of His glory. He is training and disciplining, He is testing and proving, He is beckoning and guiding, He is perplexing and reassuring, He is seemingly smiting but actually soothing and nerving us, as we are taught—as we are habituated—to depend upon Him, to trust in Him, to confide in Him, to wait on Him, to abide by His commandment. And now that it comes to be our turn, shall we not have the trust to say, "Now comes unto us a call from Him to unlearn the old notions and to learn a new lesson in the truths, in the facts, in the verities of life; now is given us a rare chance to lay ourselves open unto His Spirit with the eagerness which anguish soothed by hope ever begets in the human breast; now is granted unto us a blessed opportunity to wait on the Lord trustfully and expectant-

ly to receive a grand message, a golden gospel, a glorious revelation, a gracious dispensation?" As the end of every religion, faith has now to peep through the 'triple gates' of death and perceive the eternal glory that is in the celestial Shrine beyond. Even in our cradles we are said to be laid in the grave, not as the creatures of time to be 'rung out' with the passing hour, but as the deathless offspring of eternity. Even as we stand by cradles, we are visited with clear intimations of the high hopes, profound promises and priceless possibilities of a spirit that persists uninjured, that survives unimpaired, that soars unhampered, despite the veils and mists, the shadows and clouds, of this dark valley of life. Thus, each life which descends into its little accommodating abode, also rises as a new star, apparently as a mere speck but truly as a vast orb seemingly sinking below the horizon but actually achieving larger sweeps of an ever-enlarging circle, in uncrippled energy, in unquenched glory. Here we are to receive

from Him this truth, this assurance, that He has once and for ever made us His own, that He loves us as His own and that whatever He loves once He loves for ever. And our sole duty and responsibility lies in trusting in Him and in saying, not with surrendered will alone, but with deep confidence and vivid hope, "Thy will be done! For Thy will shall ever work our weal, our joy!" Blessed be our God, the living God, the enduring God, the eternal God, that He has even unto us—mere ephemeral, insignificant creatures—even unto us revealed this hope and brought unto our hearts this assurance!

ARADHANA AND PRARDHANA.

O Thou God of Truth! How we have, time and again, lightly and idly uttered the solemn word 'Truth' but failed to feel how Truth is Thy name, how Truth is Thine own self, how Truth alone is our dear and honoured idea, conception and hope of Thy reality, Thy eternal permanence, Thy everlasting embrace, Thy ever-living witness and guidance! 'Truth

abides,' we say; yet we fail to feel that Thou abidest and Truth abideth in Thee. We adore Thee; but we forget to honour and uphold Thee with the resolute, undivided loyalty of our hearts. Thou art our God of Truth. Now we behold Thee as the very centre, the real core, the true substance, the vital secret, of life and creation. Thou art the Truth that forbids unreality, uncertainty. Thou art the Truth that fits together all changes into one serried series, a marvellous continuity of life and growth. Thou art the Truth that eludes the inquisitive but reveals itself to the trustful. Thou art the Truth that the philosopher laboriously seeks but the devotee familiarly sees and enjoys. Thou art the Truth that makes the hope of day, even in the darkest hour of night, a fact, a certainty. Thou art the Truth that sustains the apparently faded and the seemingly exhausted life of the seed and the plant exposed to the frost and the mildew. Thou art the Truth that impels the outpouring, through every nook and corner,

every chink and crevice, of the rejuvenated, the irresistible, the abundant, the jubilant life. Thou art the Truth that nourishes the soul and braces the heart, that quickens the conscience and informs the intellect, while even the decrepit body, the quivering limb and the failing sense, with shattered health, serve as so many openings through which eternal life flows in. Thou art the Truth that makes youth such a joy, old age such a calm, death such a solemn and welcome translation, life such an irrepressible, inexhaustible power. Thou art the Truth that makes the earth below firm and solid. Thou art the Truth that makes the heavens above serene and awe-inspiring. Thou art the Truth that for ever refreshes the wafting breeze. Thou art the Truth that ever pours the flood of light into every eye and every soul. O God! The puzzling, the troubling, the baffling secret is that we cannot see, we are unable to perceive, the fulness of Thy Truth. Oh, how we condemn ourselves to little corners, petty narrownesses, passing distractions, and lose possession

of Thee, fall away from Thee, the Source of Truth! Oh, do Thou teach us to see Thee, to realise Thee, in all occurrences, in every interest and engagement of life. Oh! Thou Prime Truth! We bow down before Thee; we render obeisance unto Thee. Thou art the very life, the ceaseless pulsation, of our heart, the throb of our bosom: *that* Thou verily art in essence. We in our best moments feel how Thou art nearer unto us than our own thoughts, our inmost ideas; they are more distant as being only the outcome, the expression, of Thy immediate working in us. Thou art the mainspring, the vital secret, the fountain-source, of our existence. What is life but a genial current of joy and grace that wells up incessantly from Thy centred self? Thou art the life, the inner vitality, of our senses. Thou art that by which every sense functions. Thou art the very mould and model of our thoughts and ideas; Thou art the very essence of our feelings and emotions. Thou art the very inspiration and sanction of our aims and

ideals. Thou art the parent and the preceptor of our spirits. Words distance Thee, keep Thee aloof, instead of bringing Thee nearer unto us. In silent enjoyment, in subdued suffering, in sweet communion, we see how Thou art the very Life of our lives, the very Soul of our souls, the very stamina, the very substance, the very vitality of our existence. Thou art the whole plan, the complete purpose, the entire progress, of all our lives. Thou hast designed, Thou hast determined, Thou hast prescribed, the destiny of our lives. All our days Thou hast counted out, each in its detail; laid out each along its entire course; all with a friendly solicitude and with a parental promise of fulfilment. Thou art the indescribable, the inconceivable, and yet the very true and verifiable Ordainer of our lives. How Thou leadest us step by step, day after day! How Thou fittest the present into the past and adaptest the future to the present! Oh Thou all-knowing, all-wise God, really and truly Thou art the Author of our destinies; and even

for that prerogative we render our thanks unto Thee. Thou art the fulfiller of our lives. The whole purpose of our existence closes in Thee. All our designed activities only carry us nearer unto Thee. The soul leaps unto Thee and into Thy bracing Spirit. Thou art the ultimate goal, the eternal abode and the everlasting home of the soul. We bless Thee, we thank Thee, we adore Thee. O Thou Supreme One! Thou hast meant us to be the children of eternity, the pilgrims of everlasting progress. O, do Thou now and here so touch and shape and fashion us that we may feel the grandeur of Thy purpose and of our destiny; and do Thou in Thy mercy grant us that thrill of ecstasy which, in an overpowering measure, pulsates through us as we realise the incalculable worth and value Thou manifestly assignest even to the creatures of this world, as Thou adoptest them as Thy children. Through this delight, with the worshipful, the adoring attachment unto Thee which comes with it, do Thou make us incapable of a fall, impervious to tempt-

ation, invulnerable to the assaults of sorrows and tribulations, that so we may feel the mercy that Thou hast meant for us in all the fluctuations of time. O Thou, the eternal, the ever-abiding, the ever-enduring the ever-true, the ever-good God, do Thou disclose unto us the abundance of Thy mercy and the blessedness of Thy benignantly designed and graciously vouchsafed peace and joy in everlasting companionship with Thee. Long have we thought of Thee as the terrific God, the appalling God, as the God of Death, the God of Dissolution. Do Thou now teach us to recognise Thee as the redeeming God, the resuming God, the rejuvenating God, the eternally reliable God. Long have we in faithlessness thought of the soul as the bubble that bursts and breaks up in no time. Do Thou now teach us to realise that, being securely held in Thy embrace, we cannot fail. Our failure would be Thy discomfiture; our vanishing into emptiness, Thy privation, Do Thou instil into us the sure and saving trust that, though now limited—bounded,

circumscribed—by time and place, we are really even now enabled by the moving events of life to rise to the wider and higher outlook transcending time and place. Do Thou reveal unto us the unmistakable fact that what truly counts, what really abides, is not deceptive change but the underlying permanence; that what truly constitutes the great value and worth of our existence is that it cannot be told out by time or hedged in by place but that even now, living in Thee, incorporated in Thee, imbedded in Thee, our real life partakes of the Everlasting. May this trust abide in us! May we be disillusioned into Truth and Faith! May we be snatched and saved from the lamentable illusion that makes us the sport of passing changes! May we learn, not as a theoretical possibility but as a verifiable experience, that Thou art the Indweller in us! O Thou eternal, all-pervading God! Do Thou this day, in Thy mercy, overlook our unworthy, our unchaste, our infidel lack of confidence and trust in Thee and infuse into us the faith, the assurance, the certainty that we are al-

ways kept hale and secure in the shelter of Thy all-loving presence. We are destined to live, to grow, to expand, to rejoice for ever in Thee. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name! Thou art the all-good God unto whom is due our endless gratitude. How we misjudge Thee! How we distrust Thee! How we complain against Thee! How we arrogate to ourselves the right to scrutinise Thy ways and pronounce upon Thy doings! Even this is the height of our pitiable presumption, as it is the very abyss of our sordid baseness and ingratitude. O, do Thou pardon us in Thy all-merciful grace for this 'deadly sin' against Thy Holy Spirit. While Thou trainest and teachest even by attracting and fastening our attention and our interest upon that larger life into whose all-including range Thou transplantest affection after affection and love after love, we grieve and cry, we sob and moan, we call black names and think hard thoughts. This most heinous sin against Thee, how can it be pardoned? Even as transplantation give

larger growth and richer yield, so Thou shiftest our destinies from these narrow nooks below into the ample fields above. But we fondly fancy that for ever shall last our term here below, only to grieve for the lost touch of many a vanished hand. Oh, pardon this enormity of iniquity, in Thy all-forgetting grace. Do Thou lay it bare to our hearts, do Thou bring it home to our bosoms, that what is withdrawn from our physical eye is resumed into Thy embracing heart; that every earthly winter, by Thy wonderful transforming grace, changes into an everlasting heavenly spring, where not the sense but the soul constitutes the vinculum of comradeship. O Thou beloved God! How thou dost teach us to ennoble ourselves even by the translation thereinto of our kith and kin! We revolt against Thy noble purpose—worse than crass folly, pitiable ignorance, lamentable illusion this! Do Thou pardon us by shielding, protecting and safeguarding us against this materialism of the world and the flesh. O Thou all-merciful God! Even

through the holy bond of at-one-ment established between Thy children and Thyself, the eternal verity which time cannot wear out and our petty follies cannot defeat or destroy, Thou art incessantly augmenting our treasures, Thou art ceaselessly multiplying our family and Thou art endlessly adding to our affections in our heavenly home. Ours is no narrow homestead, a household of mundane worlds. No, not herein is our home; but we belong to the larger household of love. And those that have gone before us being made sure in Thee, we have our confidence reaffirmed that they shall abide in Thee for ever. The dear ones are gone, but it is impossible that they should vanish into nothing. Annihilation is an unthinkable condition in our relationship to Thee. Who can destroy life, when Thou art all-life? Do Thou impart unto us larger belief in Thee, infuse into us deeper faith in Thee, that we might praise Thee, glorify Thee, render our thanks unto Thee, as we understand and apprise all these arresting occurrences as Thy love-

designed preparations for each one of us to shift the scene of our lasting interests and affections. The child gone, the parent gone, the brother gone, the sister gone! But whither have they gone? They have not gone *out*; they have gone *in*. They appear to have vanished out of our sight, because they have come so very close to the heart. Does not the eye, which cannot see itself, see all in Thee? May this faith endure in us! Thee we now gratefully, reverently bless; as Thou disclosest unto us the mystery of death: "Death is the Heart of Life!" Every cemetery, every burial-place, every cremation-ground is a standing reminder of Thy proclamation that the fleeting breath of man is necessarily and even beneficently destined to fail, but the enduring, the abiding, the imperishable, God-inbreathed spirit is wafted onward and upward, homeward and heavenward. Thee we shall not shun, but shall wait on and trust in unto the very end. How blessed Thou art, enriching our heaven in Thy bosom, Thy realm of righteousness, with

Thy beloved—the cherished, the honoured, the revered! All the prophets and all the saints of the race, all that have toiled faithfully in Thy name here below, all that have loyally wrought Thy will in the strivings and struggles of this world, are there with no infirmities, no decrepitude of age, no failings of the flesh, to mar the increasing life with its ever-expansive hope and ever-deepening joy! How inconceivably vast, how incalculably rich, is that illimitable home, the eternal city, which admits them all as inmates and citizens! We render our thanks unto Thee, who dost reawaken in us, here amidst this dense darkness, a ray of hope, of comfort, of cheer; we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. What rare legacies, what tender mementos, what cherished recollections, what uplifting ideals, what inspiring models and what encouraging guides. Thou dost leave behind with us! Even as Thou art with us, Thou art dear unto each one of us amidst the consoling, comforting, cheering memories of hope and trust inspired

through the sages whose wisdom is our garnered reserve of spirit. Thou art the heart and soul of the sages. Thou art the fragrance and the aroma of their lives. The patriot and the philsopher leave us rich largesses, proofs of Thy beneficence. All these are Thy gifts. O beloved God, it is not merely compensation; but it is also real and merciful benevolence, benefaction; it is an invaluable boon and benediction which Thou leavest with us, before Thou wouldst withdraw from us those dear and honoured ones. We render our wholehearted thanks unto Thee.

The friend that seems to be gone but lives with us, he is now all a spirit to commune with, to assimilate and to absorb into ourselves. And this intermingling and intertwining in spirit-communion with our comrade and co-pilgrim can become closer, dearer intenser, sweeter, only if Thy grace abides. Oh, do thou prepare us, enable us, grant us the capacity, infuse into us the spirit, to receive and to use Thy tokens, Thy gifts, that help us grow stronger, purer,

serener, holier even by and from this exceedingly distressing occasion. Even death revives the cherished memories, the precious reminiscences, of his life. May they abide with us! May they grow into us! Nothing fails which is blessed of Thee, which partakes of Thy spirit. May we read death as the dissolution of two for the purpose of resolution into one, of reunion in closer companionship, fuller fellowship and truer love! Do thou grant Thy beloved ones each a source of increasing life, of deeper thoughts, of finer susceptibilities, of livelier hopes, of holier aspirations. Do Thou grant unto us all this, that we may grow all our days, here and hereafter, till we close in Thy eternal love and life. This is our heart-felt prayer. Do Thou most mercifully vouchsafe unto us this, our humble prayer. Blessed, blessed, blessed, be Thy name!

Om! Brahma Krupahi Kevalam!
Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

XVII

SERVICE
with Sermon on
THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF HUMAN BROTHERHOOD.
(1915)

UDBODHANA.

Unto Him, our ever-reliable, faithful Friend; unto Him, our supreme, sovereign Lord, we offer our praises and thanks, salutations and obeisances. Unto Him, the all-centered and the all-besetting God; unto Him, the all-pervading and the all-controlling God; unto Him, we render our loyal tribute of trustful and reverent adoration. Unto Him, the compassionate Witness; unto Him, the nurturing Regenerator; unto Him, the righteous Rectifier; unto Him, the gracious Saviour; unto Him tender we our hearts' grateful and reverent prostrations! Blessed be His holy name! Praised be His infinite mercy! Hallowed be His bountiful Spirit that has brought us here together. We are His

humble servants, we are His trustful devotees, we are His loving children. We adore Him, we glorify Him, we rejoice in Him, that He has vouchsafed unto us—even us, lowly, insignificant creatures—this supreme privilege of looking up to Him through the irresistible drawing-power of the Lord and partaking of the sweetness of holy communion. Blessed, blessed, blessed be His name that He has thus made man after the image of His own Spirit to find his destiny and his delight in Him! In Him is our wills' strength, in Him is our minds' wealth, in Him is our hearts' joy. We call on Him as our God, our Father, our Saviour, our eternal Companion. Blessed be His name that He has thus given us this supreme blessing of adoring Him and glorifying His name!

ARADHANA.

Thou infusest Thy love into all, Thou sheddest Thy light upon all, Thou discloses Thy way to all Thy children. Thine is the changeless Spirit which figures itself in myriad forms; Thine, the control-

ling power which holds apparently divergent forces in the focus of an unerring order. Man can trace neither the beginning nor the end of Thy power, the single power, the vital power, the originating power, the sustaining power. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name! Thou art the imperishable reality, the eternal vital truth embracing and harmonising all the wise—all the knowing, all the informing, all the illuminating. The laws of the universe are the enunciation of Thy wise designs; the principles of philosophy are the expositions of Thy profound purposes; the researches of science are the elucidations of Thy marvellous methods through age after age and in diverse departments. The brooks with their babble, the rivers with their flow, the sun with its radiance, the rainbow with its hues, the stars with their lustre, the mountains with their serenity, the woods with their freshness—all these are testimonies unto Thy self-revealing wisdom. Every fountain is the gleam of Thy joy; every grove, the chorus of Thy

harmony; every star, the peep of Thy glory; every flower, the bloom of Thy beauty. This extensive expanse of the universe is Thine own sacred fane, always open-doored to waft in and wave the hourly *harathi* of Thy praise.

Thou Ocean of mercy, inexhaustible Spring of affection, interminable Mine of compassion, our illimitable Reserve of sustenance and strength! We cast ourselves with the bounding joy of grateful hearts into Thy loving embrace, even like unto the child that is filled with the self-imparting milk from the bosom of the loving mother who, while transmitting her very substance, also infuses the love which makes life at once strong and happy, chastened and refreshed. Even as the child seeks not separation but loves to be seated on the exalted throne of the loving mother's lap, so also, fed with the holy milk of grace from Thy bosom, which rendereth the whole process of existence a growth of strength, a progress of wisdom, a pilgrimage of holiness, a triumph of joy, and even

thus nurtured, fostered, developed and sanctified, we, Thy children, desire, elect, love, to abide in the lap of Thy love. Behold the universal kingdom of our Sovereign of which we are the chosen chiefs the honoured princes ! Thou, our Sovereign Mother, Thou enrichest us with Thy bounties; Thou sanctifiest us with Thy grace, We are born and reborn, time and again, in Thy love. Thus we are heirs to Thy measureless mercy. Every night we lapse into Thee with our frail imperfections; every morning we spring up from Thee with rejuvenated beings. In sleep we are gathered into the bosom of our Mother, to be nursed with Her care and to be nerved with Her peace. In awakening, we rise with refreshed minds, with renewed hopes, with recheered hearts, to obtain the blessing of the Mother, to receive the behest of the Father and to rejoice in the service of the Master. With every returning day there comes fresh life right from the Spirit of the Creator. Thou art the Centre reaching forth Thy benevolence in all directions.

Thou hast not placed us alone. We are inseparably associated with Thee and with all in Thee. Thou art the Lord of creation. Thou hast made no object but is a marvel of Thy goodness and glory. And of all Thy marvels, this is the most marvellous that we are trusted, honoured, anointed participators in Thy purposes, as we are evolved and matured into the full destiny of our life. With trust in Thee, with hope in Thee, with a burning desire for Thee, with a passionate yearning for Thy love, with surging, swelling thankfulness for Thy mercy, we chant the sacred prayer; Lead us out of untruth into truth; lead us out of darkness into light; lead us out of death into life eternal; Thou the self-effulgent One! Thou the all-inspiring One! Shed the cheering smile of Thy enrapturing countenance and sprinkle the honeyed dew of Thy affection on our parched hearts, that, thus strengthened, thus fortified against all aggressive temptations, thus rendered sure of foot and firm of resolve, we might do Thy will and sing

Thy praise for evermore. This is our most humble supplication. Do Thou graciously respond unto it.

Thou our Warrant and our Guide, do Thou grant unto us the priceless joy and grace of some little, some quivering hope of direct, invigorating, thrilling communion with Thy Holy Spirit. This is our supreme need on this solemn occasion. Do Thou mercifully grant it unto us.

UPADESAMU.

Let us for a while think of Him and think unto Him this thought that He hath, in His great mercy, granted unto us a glimpse of His saving, sanctifying truth, by which alone it is possible to know the Custodian of all truth, the Master of all truth, the Sovereign of all truth, the Revealer of all truth.

Here is a verse from the Yajur-Veda Aranyaka: "The *Brahman* is the inner Soul of all existence." To begin with, it is noteworthy that this verse is as age-long as the most ancient of scriptures. Is this not a convincing proof that religion

is not restricted to one age or to one country—not the privilege of one chosen people or the monopoly of one favoured realm? It is eternal as the Truth of God, universal as the Love of God. In the dim hoary past when the civilisation of the world was yet in its infancy, the blessed *rishi*, illumined by the Spirit, was enabled to perceive His glory and to sing it rapturously, not as the feeble echo of a reported truth, but as the oracular voice of a realised experience. My brethren, the *Brahman* is the very inner Soul seated in the hearts of all objects even as every crystal consists of particles symmetrically clustered around a central axis with its forces of attraction and cohesion; even as in every organism the centre is the nucleus containing not merely the force around which additions might gather but also the living, cohering power which draws and holds together all the congenial accretions in the upgrowth of the microscopic speck of vital life. The Lord now sends forth, with the impulse of His own Spirit, myriads of created

objects; and again He resumes them into Himself—not to annihilate but to cherish, not to wipe out but to conserve, not to engulf but to regenerate. Thus we are daily at the close of a great cycle with the in-coming of night, and again we are at the beginning of a new cycle with the returning dawn of light. As in the study of science and even in the pursuit of philosophy, with their more or less limited quest for immediate causes; as in the visions of poetry, with its intuitive attraction for some select, favourite features of a more or less soul-suffusing emotion; as in the endeavours of art to shift the concrete charm on to the canvas, so too, in the daily routine of the work-a-day world, we place ourselves at every point within hedge and fence, partition and division. We lose ourselves in the labyrinth of abstract laws, content with immediate antecedents —connected links of phenomenal sequence. We forget, in the midst of man-made theories, that the central vitality is God Himself. As the child is but the child reprod-

uced, as the friend is but the 'alter ego'—'the other self,' as the disciple is but the preceptor rejuvenated, as the harvest is but the seed manifolded, even so the universe is the offspring—the creation and the companion, the expansion and the harmony of the supreme Spirit-God. He is not merely a distant driving-power but the ever-present, immediate, inmost vitality. God is the plan and the purpose, the essential and enduring reality, behind this ever-unfolding scene called creation. Let us realise it as a literal fact that even now my tongue could not speak, the other organs of speech could not form the modulations to which we give the name of language, the atmospheric throbs of undulation could not carry my humble utterance to your receptive minds, my feeble expressions could not find a sympathetic response in your valuable experience, but for the direct working, nay, the personal presence, of the Universal Witness in our souls through the whole round of these seemingly trivial transactions. When the sages described Him

as the *Sarvantharyamin*, they did not closet or confine Him at the centre of innumerable ramparts and fortifications, there to be segregated and thus shut out from our daily doings. In all our diversified activities, He precedes us, accompanies us, follows us, hovers over us, encompasses, underlies, permeates us. In the beat of the heart, in the wink of the eye, in the movement of the tongue, in the sensitiveness of touch, in the swing of the limb, in the delights of fragrance, in the charms of beauty, in the resolves of the will, in the aspirations of the soul—everywhere the Lord is the inspiration; the Lord is the effectuation; the Lord is the in-coming impulse; the Lord is the out-going endeavour; the Lord is the concluding ratification; the Lord is the cheering benediction. We misbelieve, we delude ourselves, when we talk of the laws of science and their compelling rule. The patient probings of the searching student, the thrilling raptures of the sensitive artist, the selfless services of the generous philanthropist,

the piercing insight of the mystic seer—all originate in, all emerge from, all converge towards, all terminate in, the supreme God. As the centre of a circle is not the point which shows the distance of one part from another but really that focus from which proceed the countless lines comprised within and constituting the complete circuit, so the Lord is the centre as well as the circumference of the full circle of life. The Lord in His sanctified Self is present in the inner soul, aye, seated in the very heart of every created being. As the good sovereign on the throne, apparently isolated and seemingly detached and unconcerned, is yet the source, the fountain-head, the central sanctum of authority and the sole stay and the supreme strength of the realm, even so the supreme Lord is seated in the inner core of all created beings; and from Him wells up and flows forth all vitalising spirit. He is not the mere ruler that issues orders and lets things have their own play; He is not the mere teacher who imparts hints to

the pupil and leaves him to work out the solution; He is not merely the skilled artist who sketches the design and expects his humbler workmen to rear the edifice; He is not even the parent who apportions his or her life to the offspring and gradually consigns it to its own care. He is the ever-present, direct, immediate personal, controlling Power. Yes! Therein lies the intimacy, the immediacy of God's presence, control and authority. From that place to this He has, in very fact, moved me to come to you. It has pleased Him to prompt you all to meet me, as a humble, trembling, erring exponent of this great truth today. He has desired that grain unto grain be attached in the plank on which we are seated. He has ordered that particle with particle be connected to make the floor on which we stand. He has arranged that layer upon layer be put into the spherical compact of this earth. Lastly, He has ordained that the whole fraternity of spirits do become one in Him.

Therein consists the religious gospel of

brotherhood. All creatures become one in Him, as all children become one in the mother. If brother holds to brother, if sister clings to sister, if brother and sister embrace each the other, it is all because of, it is as they all become one in, the mother. The love which the mother remits, seemingly separate and distributive, is really conjoint and unitive. All the children gather themselves into one sweet concourse within the wonb whence they have successively been shaped into being, on the bosom from which they have successively drawn the very elixir of life, around the arms within which they have successively been enfolded, upon the lap whereon they have successively sported, and in the home wherein they have successively been cradled into joy and nurtured into vigour. She nurses the helpless babe into the attempting child, strengthens the timid child into the confident youth, and matures the confident youth into the dutiful householder. This blessing of the Spirit-Mother

makes all brothers and sisters one in Her. The controlling authority of the teacher, the comprehensive instruction of the teacher, the unifying affection of the teacher, in a word, the central personality of the teacher, makes one body of the class-members around the teacher in their growth into life-long companionship, aye, in several cases, into eternal co-pilgrimage. As the children in the home become one in the mother, as the disciples in the class become one in the teacher, as the subjects in the state become one in the sovereign, we become one in the Lord—not merely that we become one *for* the Lord, not that we become one *through* the Lord, not that we become one *with* the Lord, but that we become one *in* the Lord. We are thus pervaded and environed by the Divine Spirit and fused into one compact, inseparable, indissoluble brotherhood—not co-operation of resources, not division of labour, not contract between mutual helpmates, but unification—complete oneness—in the Spirit, albeit occassionally sup-

pressed by tyranny, enfeebled by indifference, blindfolded by ignorance or atrophied by insensibility. We are primarily one, because He has created us one. We are essentially one, because we are moulded of the same substance. We are eternally one, because 'all are the undying offspring of one Sire', not merely 'but parts of one stupendous whole'. Herein lies the real truth, the central truth, of our spiritual life. Our brotherhood is not the brotherhood of the many grouped together as one, as is the ordinary notion of brotherhood. It is not the brotherhood of diverse elements knit together, but the brotherhood of the multifarious emerging out of the One; not the brotherhood of several notes mingling into one strain, but the brotherhood of many offshoots from one parent-stock; not the brotherhoot of several workmen labouring in one field or factory, but the brotherhood of the many disciples germinating from the spiritual seedplot of a single Preceptor.

Oh Thou *Antharyamin*, *Sarvantharyamin*,

we are all one in Thee. We cannot, care not, will not, dare not to seek to express in words what Thou art unto us all and what we are unto one another in Thee; we are happy in the bliss of its experience. Do Thou increasingly deepen and heighten, strengthen and sweeten in us this sense of oneness with Thee and in Thee. Blsesed, blessed, blessed be Thou and Thy name, now and for ever!

Om! Thathsath!

Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

XVIII

SERVICE:
BRAHMOTSAV.
(1916)

Praise and glory—the praise of our whole-hearted adoration, the glory of universal dominion—praise and glory unto Thee, the supreme, the victorious One! The praise of our deep gratitude, the praise that springs spontaneously from the fountain of feeling hearts, is Thine. The glory of eternal dominion, the glory of unrivalled supremacy, the glory of unapproachable majesty, the glory of all-ruling sovereignty, the glory of all-surpassing ascendancy, is Thine. Within our hearts, are embossed in inextinguishable characters of holy fire the hymns of Thy praise. On the imperishable tablets of the universe, in the radiant star, in the smiling blossom, in the crystal brook, in the gentle zephyr, is proclaimed Thy universal domain. Praise and glory unto Thee!

Seated in the centre of the universe, ra-

diating in unquenchable effulgence from the farthest extremities of space, enduring from all eternity and yet perennially unfolding the wonderful pageantry of time and incident, Thou art All-in-all, alike transcending and pervading, at once self-contained and immanent, our All-perfect Lord. Praise and glory unto Thee!

Thou the Supreme One, the Loving One, the Adorable One, what words can give fitting expression to our surging feelings on this day? Thou, ever-beloved God of all mankind, merciful, irrepressibly eager for our weal—even for us sinners—the supreme, majestic Ruler of us all, Monarch of all monarchs, the unrivalled Emperor to whose sceptre all mortal heads, however exalted, bow and submit in reverence! And yet Thou carest for us; Thou wouldst not give us up; even this vile worm is precious unto Thee! Thou, in Thy glorious triumphs of love, descendest into depths, into lowly, receding, engulfing depths, which baffle human comprehension. Thou art not merely the towering God but also the deep-

diving God, plunging into the sunken retreats of the fallen. Blessed, thrice-blessed, be Thou that Thou carest even for me! I rejoice in triumph, I thrill with unutterable joy, that Thou carest even for me! My Father holds me dear; my Mother appraises me beyond all computation of human values. I am *dhanya*, I am *dhanya*, elated, blessed, beyond all calculation. In profound gratitude, I proclaim Thy victory, *Jai*, *Jai*, *Jai*, glory, glory, glory unto the Supreme Ruler, the Sole Master, the Eternal Sovereign of all!

Hymn–*Ashtanganamaskaramakhilantharyami*
(Telugu)

Verily Thou art All, All-in-all, the All-sufficing, All-absorbing God. Thou art All-in-all unto us. Truly, verily, we spring out of Thee; we grow in Thee; and we are resumed unto Thee. In the very conception of our being, Thou art implied. In the growth and development of life, in the unfolding and outflowering of the soul, in the quest and accomplishment of human destiny, Thou art the eternal Pre-

server, Fulfiller and In-gatherer. And as we have sung, Thou art the free Giver of all good things, the bountiful Bestower of all boons, the ready Fulfiller of all desires, the prompt Response to all prayers. Our debt immense of endless gratitude how can we express in human language, compute in human expression? We owe all that we have, all that we can be, all that we desire to be, to Thee alone. And, in return, what can we possibly render unto Thee but our *ashtanganamaskarams*, the obeisance of all our faculties, the adoration of all our powers, the devotion of our whole existence? So with all the faculties and all the powers incessantly growing and expressing themselves in and through us we adore Thee! With our eyes we adore Thee; with our ears we adore Thee; with every other sense in us we adore Thee. With the messages that the eye receives we adore Thee; with the blessings that the eye realises we adore Thee; with the truth that the eye perceives we adore Thee; with all the bounty that the eye enjoys we adore

Thee; with the radiance that the eye loves to dwell upon we adore Thee. With every sweet, every charming word of sympathy, every holy whisper received into the soul through the portal of the ear, we adore Thee. Aye, with every other sense in us we strike up a universal chorus, a song celestial of praise and a hymn heavenly of glory unto Thee!

CONGREGATIONAL CHANT:

Asatho ma Sadgamaya, thamaso ma jyothirgamaya, mrithyormamritham gamaya, aviraveermayedhi rudra yaththe dakshinam mukham thena mam pahi nithyam.

Thou *hast* been surely leading us out of all untruth—sham and show, fashion and pretension—into the truth, certitude and reality of wisdom, sympathy, fellowship, trust. Thou *hast* been wisely guiding us out of darkness—prejudice, selfishness, self-seeking, pride, conceit—into the light, the holy vision of Thy face, the manifestation of Thy presence, the revelation of Thy purpose. Thou *hast* been graciously lift-

ing us out of death—apathy, unconcern, heartlessness, passion, hatred, malice, inhumanity, godlessness—into the immortality of divine life, holy communion, disinterested service, consecrated duty, devoted love. For all this we render Thee our thanks. And with the yearning of limited for unlimited experience, we once again implore Thee: Lead us out of untruth into truth; lead us out of darkness into light; lead us out of death into larger and holier life. Oh! Thou awe-inspiring One, Thou resplendant One, do Thou, in Thine inexhaustible radiance, shed the smile of Thy countenance on our craving hearts; deliver us from the fear of death; fortify us against the inroads of temptation and cherish us for ever in the embrace of Thy loving protection. This is our humble supplication. Do Thou mercifully grant it out of Thy abundant grace.

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!
Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

XIX

BIRTHDAY FAMILY SERVICE.*

(1922)

Hymn—*Kanugontini Kanulapanduvaganu*

(Telugu)

Om! Glory, glory, thrice-sung glory unto the Giver of all good! He is the sole Giver of all good: of all that is good, of what is wholly good, of the good that never fails, of the good whence all good springs and spreads, of the good that consecrates every life unto the good. Unto Him, the Giver of the supreme good, glory, glory, glory for ever!

We need no *udbodhan*, no special invocation of the spirit—no separate exhortation, to apply the mind or to attune the heart to God. The darling, dear unto us all in the All-merciful and All-blessing God—he is the solemn *udbodhan*, the uplifting invocation to-day, as our eyes and hearts dwell on him, braced with the goodness, beaming with the grace, of God. He is

* In Pithapuram Palace, on the twelfth birthday of the senior Mahārājakumār (8—10—22.).

unto our lives a rich token of the love of God—of the motherly affection, the fatherly protection, of God. The dear one, so charming to our eyes and so enchanting to our hearts—that is the call, the compelling call, to us that we do turn to Him, the Giver of all good, in profound reverence, and praise and glorify Him with boundless gratitude. He has vouchsafed this priceless boon unto this home, this circle of relations and friends, this ancient and honoured House; and yet He asks for no return, He looks for no acknowledgment from us. However, the intense craving, the irrepressible longing, of our grateful hearts impels us to thank Him, to praise Him, to glorify Him; for He is the good God, the gracious Giver of all good.

The sages have seen and said that this entire creation is indwelt and inspired by God; and we have been taught, it has been brought home to us, that this wide-spread universe is the sacred temple of the supreme Deity. When exalted to this blessed consciousness, wherever we be, we

stand on the holy ground of His temple, we are always and everywhere in the sanctifying presence of our God. Nevertheless, while He is the all-including, the all-pervading, the all-transcending One, even to betoken His particular solicitude, love and grace, He comes home to us, time and again, in events and experiences, in incidents andsuggestions, that move the heart and urge the spirit with an irresistible attraction towards God; and then we know that God is, not merely the general protector and the common companion, but also the individual care-taker and the personal friend of each one of us. He thus grants it unto us to see and feel, to realise and rejoice, that not in the gross, not in the aggregate, but through direct care, individual attention, intimate affection, He comes close and He attaches Himself to us. Thereby He endears Himself to each one of us as our own author, protector, preserver, friend, teacher, saviour, spouse: He thus rears unto Himself a sweet home in the loving heart and a holy sanctuary

in the adoring soul of each one of His children. At one time we stand in the outer temple of the universe, next we are drawn into the inner shrine of the home; and further still we are translated into the holy of holies of the soul. Hence, far yet near, everywhere yet at home, always yet now, vast without yet intimate within, He stands revealed, beyond doubt, to our physical senses as well as to our feeling hearts. Blessed, blessed, blessed be His name!

Hymn-*Anandamaye Brahmanandamaye* (Telugu)

Thou art our own God; truly and verily Thou art our own dear God. Our hearts abounding with joy, we approach Thy holy feet today. As we behold Thy boon, Thy blessing, in this dear one, how our hearts fill and flow out with feelings of gratitude unto Thee! Thou hast undoubtedly been near and dear unto us. This our humble home, this our little household has been glorified, has been sanctified, by Thy presence. Thou art that profound reality of which all this is a marvellous manifestation. Thy tender, affectionate, providen-

tial presence illumines this home, enlivens this family; we bow down before Thee and we thank Thee, not out of the awe urged by majesty, but out of the reverence inspired by love and holiness. We are nearer and closer unto Thee than the embrace of Thy love; we are inspired and indwelt by Thine own hallowed spirit. Oh! Thou dear God, Thou thrice-beloved Lord, blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name!

Thou art undoubtedly present here: this dear one is the witness of Thy sweet presence. Aye, the whole frame thrills with the quickening touch of Thy holy presence. Dear One, sweet One, gracious One, enrapturing One, we reverently bow down before Thee, in devout obeisance unto Thy holy spirit. Indeed, we are so suffused with the sense of our closeness and dearness unto Thee that we hardly know how to think and feel that we are apart enough to talk to Thee and to thank Thee. All-embracing, all-pervading that Thou art, do Thou graciously grant that unto these grateful hearts and adoring souls it might

be possible to stand a little aside, just one step apart, that we might glance at Thee, that we might rejoice to feel how charming, how bewitchingly beautiful Thou art. Oh! Thou sweet One, even because Thou art the sweet God, Thou art also the sacred God; Thou art happiness itself, even because Thou art holiness itself; Thou art goodness itself, even because Thou art grace itself. Sweet and holy, good and gracious, Thou dost really transform the whole universe into Thy tabernacle and transfigure every soul into the image of Thy sacred Self. Hence, it sounds almost like presumption to say, we thank Thee! Art Thou not too near for words and too inward for thoughts? Infused into every particle of our being, inwoven into every incident of our lives, Thou art too intimate for the heart to conceive, Thou art too unique for the tongue to describe. Nevertheless, if not to clarify the thought, yet to ease the strain on the heart, these winged words come spontaneously upon the lip. Oh! Thou sweet One, we thank

Thee, we praise Thee, we blesss Thee, we glorify Thee. Hallowed, hallowed be Thy name!

Hymn—*Dinamadi sudinamugada* (Telugu)

This home is ours, only so far as Thou dwellest in it with us; this home is ours, only so long as we dwell in Thy happy company. This home is ours that we might be privileged to make it Thy abode. From Thee it comes as Thy gift and blessing, to be rendered back unto Thee as a love-token and a thank-offering. This home is dear for Thy sake and happy as indwelt by Thee. May this strengthening, sanctifying sense of our living in Thine own abode, abide with us always, filling our whole hearts and shaping our entire lives, everywhere and at all times! Carried, as though on the wings of the winds, we go from here to what are called far-off-places; but there, too, Thou art as surely and clearly manifest as here; and we feel perfectly at home. Indeed, we have not gone, we can never go, to an unknown land; since we can never go away from Thee, we can never roam

out of Thy reach. Wherever we are, Thou art with us, we are in Thee. Again, as we come back to what the world calls our home, we are, as before, with Thee, abiding, as ever, in Thee. Thus we are always at home, everywhere at home; since Thou art our home. We rejoice in this blissful consciousness, in this blessed assurance, that Thou art our home and for ever we dwell in Thee as our home.

Divided in body but united in heart and soul, we trace the course of our days as co-pilgrims; and Thou art pleased to bless our progress with Thine own rare boons, Thine own bountiful gifts. Parent, spouse, child, preceptor, companion, friend, associate—all are land-marks of the soul's progress in this pilgrimage of life; for them all we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. God hovering, God accompanying, God sustaining, God preceding, God following—such is the bliss of this life-pilgrimage; and as the pilgrims greet one another, they realise that this pilgrimage is all in Thee and unto Thee; and

for this we render Thee our whole-hearted thanks.

This darling comes to us out of Thy mystery—a secret, no doubt open as day-light unto Thee, but wonderful as a marvel unto us—the miracle of maternity. And as the darling comes, Thy providence, Thy anticipative mercy, prompts us to press the darling to our bosoms as Thy gift—a fresh donation of Thy love, a new ministration of Thy grace ; and in the advent of this darling we sight Thee, in the caress of this cherub we touch Thee. Its smiles are Thy greetings; its lisps are Thy messages; and we feel blessed in them. As we count each day in the growing life of this sweet one, we feel the call to a new promise and pledge, to a fresh covenant with Thee—the covenant to own Thee and trust Thee as our sole care-taker, our ever-vigilant protector, our ever-faithful friend, our ever-reliable guide in this heavenward pilgrimage. This darling's daily life, so wisely ordered and so mercifully nurtured, reiterates the convic-

tion to our hearts that the rarest gifts of our lives come out of Thy pure grace, Thy unsolicited, unexpected, abounding grace. Thus the life of this dear little one is alike an illumination unto the mind and a benediction unto the heart. And we thank Thee and we bless Thee, the good God, the gracious God, for this precious darling—the source of our hearts' comfort and joy, the object of our souls' prayer and hope. We feel we cannot adequately acknowledge, we cannot correctly estimate, we cannot even clearly conceive, the immense measure of our gratitude and our thankfulness. What has he not been unto us, during these twelve merciful years, as a perennial proof of Thy providence? When the perplexed mind or the doubting heart asks, what-like will the morrow be?, Thou presentest this loved one to the mind and to the heart: as though to say, here is the pledge of mercy, here is the guarantee of goodness, for the morrow; and thus we are taught to bow down before Thee and to trust in Thee. Erring in our plans and

purposes, frail in our vows and resolves, we do not quite know, we cannot clearly make out, the marvels and the mercies which Thy divine design seeks to disclose even through our erring ways and our wasted days. For the advancing years unfold the guidance of Thy spirit in the life of every man and reveal the triumph of Thy grace over all human temptations. We are thus trained ardently to desire and taught devoutly to pray, "Thy will be done, truly and verily, Thy will be done!" In this manner the pledge of Thy providence is ratified through Thy daily and hourly nurturing of this infant life, through Thy ceaseless watch over these tender buds of affection; and as we repeatedly experience Thy mercy, Thy love, thus manifested to our eyes and conveyed into our hearts, we ask, in wonder, what richer blessings we could have even from Thee, the God of all goodness. And involuntarily the grateful heart and the rejoicing soul exclaim, "God of goodness and of grace, for this dear boon of Thy love, for

this rare gift of Thy grace, do Thou accept our self-surrendering obeisance unto Thee." Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name !

Hymn—*Anandamritha Namah* (Sanskrit)

Twelve years, twelve precious years, twelve blessed years counted, not with the beat of the clock, but with the prayers and benedictions of the heart, how passing rich they have been with Thy mercies! Oh! Mother, Father, Friend, Protector, Teacher, Sanctifier, how signficant, how informing, how purposeful, have these twelve years been unto us ! How they have been daily reminders unto us of our duty to sanctify all our aims and endeavours with unswerving trust in Thy wisdom and unflinching obedience to Thy will! Indeed, this darling is a standing miracle, evoking our profound adoration—a living cell, a growing germ, a self-unfolding shape, a finished figure, a hope incarnate, a joy manifest ! Thou, the Eternal One, Thou hast thus chosen to reveal Thy ever-present providence unto our eyes; aye, even to bring home to our

hearts the supreme reality of Thy participation and Thy benediction in our daily, hourly life. For all this mercy we humbly, gratefully, reverently render our warmest thanks unto Thee. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou now and for ever!

We would recount unto Thee, with the thanks of our hearts and the praise of our souls, these numerous tokens and manifestations of Thy love and mercy, even through this, the very dear, lovingly-cherished gift of our darling. With what aching eagerness of the heart we besought Thy mercy to be made manifest unto our eyes and our hearts—how we wept and implored, how we sighed and supplicated, to be vouchsafed a light to be illumining, cheering, adoring this House! Then the darling—the response unto our prayers and the recompense unto our tears—came, not as nature's normal product, but as God's special boon; and we bowed before Thee and we sang Thy praise. And now, with the liveliest memories, we recall that auspicious moment of his advent—a star, a

blossom, a sweet music-note, a buoyant life-throb, fresh added to creation. Yet we could not imagine or foresee the full worth of this blessing. With advancing years, as the silver line has broadened, as the crescent moon has waxed, what wealth of intelligence, affection, hope, joy has been gradually disclosed! He has thus been an abiding witness of Thy mercy unto us.

Yet such is the frailty of our faith that we often forget that this Thy gift is safe and secure with the guarantee of Thy providential watch. A passing cloud of distemper would make us sigh and feel perplexed; yet every time Thou wouldst convey the soothing glance of Thy presence, the cheering touch of Thy mercy, unto our troubled hearts. And the repeated stimulus thus given to trust and hope has been of inestimable service in winning our souls to Thy adoration. For all this direct dispensation of Thy mercy and grace we render our thanks unto Thee.--Again, how this growing joy has been in-

ducing a growing life in us—its lisp developed into speech, its toddle quickened into race, its glance deepened into observation, its touch intensified into study; all these have served to widen our prospect, sweeten our tasks, soothe our pains, chasten our pleasures, enlarge our sympathies, fortify our faith. The dear one has been growing under our eyes; the mind as the repository of knowledge, the heart as the casket of love, the conscience as the oracle of the right, the soul as the shrine of the Spirit, the body as the vehicle of service—all these have been growing and expanding as the very fulfilment of our prayers. And with these, the father's heart and the mother's heart, how they have felt or formed fresh hopes and fresh duties, fresh promises and fresh pledges! For all these, we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee.—Then, the other darlings who have come after him, feasting the eye, gladdening the heart, enchanting the soul—how they have repeated and multiplied, through their growing lives, all the marvels

and mercies revealed through their elder brother! Thus Thy holy spirit has been building up this sweet home, with its verified hopes and augmented trust, with its reinforced energies and amplified love, all to be employed in Thy service and devoted unto Thy glory. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name!

Hymn—*Vandanam sada Anandadevatha*

(Sanskrit)

Again we approach Thy footstool, we bow before Thy sacred feet, and we deposit on Thy holy altar all the hopes and all the expectations of our hearts. We would own and acknowledge that Thy love is the pledge unto those hopes, Thy mercy the warrant for those expectations. Why should we petition for favours; why should we appeal for mercies? Thou anticipatest all the favours that we would seek; Thou vouchsafest in advance all the mercies that we would supplicate. Even as the loving and beloved child approaches the dear and honoured parent, we approach Thee; not to disclose the hidden, not to re-

veal the unknown, but to own and to proclaim that the parent has been a true parent, a good parent, a loving parent, a gracious parent—more faithful than a friend, more constant than a companion, more solicitous than a preceptor, more watchful than a care-taker, more intimate than a guide. Thou art not merely the designer and the author, Thou art truly and verily the whole substance, the entire sustenance, the total happiness, of our lives. We, therefore, confidently look forward to the future well-being, the steady growth and the certain happiness, of our darling, in Thy providence and through Thy grace, notwithstanding our shortcomings. And thus we render unto Thee—unto Thy keeping and care—this gift that Thou hast so mercifully vouchsafed unto us. May we never fail of confidence, of sure trust and certain hope, that the future of our darling is ordained to be bright and cheerful through Thy grace! May we ever rest firm in the faith that this dear one will grow thoughtfully, truthfully and benevolently,

under Thy protection; and may we ever retain the assurance that our prayers and supplications will be fulfilled in his God-fearing and God-adoring life and that whatever we have, in our humble day, wished and desired to do, will be achieved and accomplished in his career, through Thy mercy and Thy grace! The faith which we have struggled to keep, may he steadily sustain; the love which we have imperfectly realised, may he live in all its fulness; where we have halted in doubt, may he walk steady in wisdom! Thus in Thy mercy, through Thy grace, may he be a guarantee that our home, our family, our House, will be still further exalted in the good-will of man and the glory of God! Vouchsafe unto us the belief and the trust that our endeavours will be his accomplishments; our friends will be his unfailing supporters; and thus our prayers will be the realised assets of his life. And grant, we beseech Thee, that Thy mercy may so grow and Thy grace may so dwell in him that

he be the loving brother unto all those that count as kith and kin, and the benevolent care-taker unto all those that number among the well-wishers and dependents, of this family. Likewise, may these six beloved nurslings grow together as the darlings of grace, achieving for this ancient and illustrious House an imperishable name for love and service! And these dear, pure ones, may they grow sweetly and securely in Thy love, Thy wisdom and Thy holiness! And not only these six, but also and likewise, these threescore and more,* made dear unto us even through the inspiration of Thy love, these fair blossoms, may they grow into the full fruit, of Thy mercy! From the heart of the desert Thou callest forth the living spring; in the centre of the gloom Thou kindlest the shining stars; out of the deeps of despair Thou churnest up the nectar of hope; even thus, amidst our arid apathy Thou hast

* The 'children' of the Maharajah's Orphanage, present at the Service.

planted this Kalpatharu of Love. The fatherless fathered, the motherless mothered, the homeless nestled, the rejected owned, the forlorn embraced, they are Thine own children, the very offspring of Thy love. As our hearts beat in unison with theirs, even here is reared Thy shrine, Thy sacred fane. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou; as we feel blessed in and through them, and we bless Thee for them !

This household, this larger home, this ever-growing family, do Thou bless it ! Do Thou bless him and her that constitute its fatherly protection and its motherly affection. Thou hast set unto them the solemn duty of fostering these tender ones; grant unto them Thy guidance, impart unto them Thy strength, reveal unto them Thy purpose, vouchsafe unto them Thy love, in an ever-increasing measure. Grant, we beseech Thee, likewise, Thy mercy and Thy grace unto all those that are gathered here as the well-wishers of the House. May they all be filled with the one sweet sense of fellowship in spirit: and may they all be

knit together with the holy ties of brotherhood in God ! Thus may Thy supreme purpose be achieved, even the Universal Sway of Love and the Eternal Reign of Righteousness ! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou, now and for evermore !

Om ! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !
Om ! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

PRAYERS
AND
MEDITATIONS.

XX

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

(191)

Thou Infinite, Eternal, Omnipresent Being, Thou from whom, in whom, unto whom we live, move, grow and gather, Thou the Lord of our days, Thou the Witness of our ways, Thou the Guide along the course of our lives, praised, thanked, saluted, glorified be Thou of us all ever and everywhere! The Author of our lives, the Ordainer of our destinies the strengthening Power, the guiding Wisdom, the protecting Providence, the fostering Mercy, the cherishing Love, the saving Grace of all, Thou art our own dear God—dear past all computation, dear as the very vitality of our lives, dear as quickening breath as feeling consciousness, as pulsing activity, as perceiving wisdom, dear unto the rejoicing heart, dear unto the adoring spirit. Thou art so unspeakably dear unto us. Thou art the Substance, the Essence,

the innermost Reality of our lives. We can conceive the possibility of our existence, we can imagine the bare idea of life itself, only as from Thee, of Thee, in Thee, unto Thee. Words are weak; thoughts are feeble; feelings are frail; all our human efforts to name, define, describe, determine Thee, disclose Thee, are utterly defective, absolutely ineffective. But our hearts feel, our own self-consciousness testifies, that Thou art the sole reality-the basis, the support, the strength, the substance, the spirit of all things. Oh dear, dear God, this inestimable privilege, boon, blessing, Thou hast vouchsafed even unto these, Thy humble children, thus to feel confident, certain, absolutely and thoroughly convinced, that Thou art the supreme Reality, the eternal Verity—the Knower, the Ordainer, the Controller, the Sustainer, the Sanctifier. Yet who can define Thee, who may dare to describe Thee, who so simple as to presume to determine Thee? Beloved One! Our yearning, longing hearts would flow forth toward Thee, though in

these poor, frail words. Ours is a keen delight, an intense joy, a transporting ecstasy, as we feel how true, good, merciful, charming and enrapturing Thou art. Thou our own dear God! Thou art seated in our hearts, enshrined in our souls, enthroned in our homes, exalted over and above and beyond all conceivable power and majesty. We are sure that in this magnification, this exaltation, this glorification of our Beloved lies the truth, the strength, the pleasure, the very salvation of our lives. On this happy, holy day, a day rich with the remembrances of the past and the hopes of the future, on this truly auspicious day, we draw close to Thee, we embrace Thee, as our dear God. Our joys are all refined, sweetened, enriched by being thus gifted from Thee, by being thus consecrated unto Thee.

Beloved One! Amidst distractions, despite diversions, notwithstanding cares and anxieties, how often and in how many forms Thou hast visited us this day—the first gleam revealing Thy presence, the first

whisper singing Thy praise, the first thought spontaneously springing to Thy throne, the first desire involuntarily reaching out for Thy embrace! Beloved One, the endeared One of our hearts, the adored One of our souls! We feel that, having Thee, we have all, we lack nothing and we need want nothing. We have Thee as our own, in all Thy inexhaustible life and love. From Eternity to Eternity we are conceived in Thy Spirit, cradled in Thy Love, nourished in Thy Mercy, transfigured in Thy grace, embosomed in Thy Holiness. Oh Thou intimate, individual Friend, Guide, Protector, Parent! Wherever we turn, whatever we think of, whatsoever we engage in, whomsoever we lean on, we behold Thee. All, all objects are indwelt, inspirited by Thee. But for Thee, void of Thee, abstracted from Thee, what were we all, what were this solid world, what were those radiant orbs, what were this bracing atmosphere? Mere shows, fleeting shadows unsubstantial dreams, vanishig mists! Thou dwellest in us, filling us, permeating us,

shaping us. It is Thou that grantest reality, permanency, purpose, aim, destiny, value and worth unto each one of us and unto all objects. Oh Thou Immanent One Thou the solemn, supreme, awe-inspiring, all-attracting, all-engaging, all-embracing all-absorbing One, we bow down before Thee, we thank Thee, praise Thee and adore Thee. We throb and quiver with joy as we find our bliss, our beatitude, in Thee. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou! With what unstinted bounty, with what ceaseless benevolence, Thou dost pour Thy blessings upon us! Every breath, every pulse, every beat of the heart is Thy gift. Every second, every tick of the clock, reckons and records Thy kindness, Thy mercy. Beloved! How can we estimate the Invaluable, how can we assess the priceless? How abundant, incomparably valuable, are Thy gifts and blessings! With grateful hearts we render thanks unto Thee for all the gifts of mercy, all the largesses of love, all the boons of wisdom, all the blessings of grace vouchsafed in the

year that has passed. Humbly, gratefully reverently, worshipfully we render our thanks unto Thee, we place our living hearts at Thy sacred feet, and we dedicate our adoring souls to Thy Holy Spirit!

Om ! Santhih !

XXI
USHAHKEERTHAN.
(1916)

Thou the Lord of our hearts, Thou the sanctified Spouse of all Souls, Thou the resplendent, effulgent Glory! We come to Thee, we draw near to Thee, we longingly seek Thy holy feet to adore Thee, to be wholly, absolutely, eternally dedicated and consecrated unto Thee. Thou the Charmer of our hearts; Thou the Enrapturer of our souls! Our highest happiness, our grandest glory, our sweetest delight and our serenest peace—all, all are found eternally to abide in Thee, haloed with the unquenchable radiance of the stars above and adorned with the unfading beauty of the flowers below. Thou the *Prananadha* of our hearts, so charming, so captivating, so absorbing unto our hearts! And in this first dawn of the day, as the world around is reposed in refreshing slumbers, preparing for a newer life, a holier joy, we come here to sing and glorify

Thy name, to be once again wedded, espoused, unto Thy Holy Spirit as humble adorers and servants. May we seize Thee, adhere to Thee, have a firm and inseparable hold of Thee, and thus confide in Thee, abide in Thee, surrender ourselves wholly to Thee, this day and every hour and every minute of the day! Thy living, loving thrilling presence be felt in our hearts, in our homes, in our shrines of worship, in our retreats of meditation, in our jubilant recreations, in our self-disciplining duties, in our cordial conversations, in the enjoyment of our feasts and in the solemnity of our fasts! Dear beloved God! We embrace Thee, we give ourselves up unto Thee, we would be absorbed into Thy bosom. May we be whole-heartedly, devoutly, righteously assimilated, assumed into Thee, that we may know no existence but in Thee! Bless us that, knowing no separation, we may for ever dwell in union with and in Thee! Oh! Beloved God! Blessed with peace, joy and holiness, may every heart become a holy shrine unto Thee;

may Thy mercy spread out and extend over the whole universe; and, held tegether by sweet ties of eternal fellowship, may we realise Thy mercy, reveal Thy mercy—sense Thy mercy, spread Thy mercy—everywhere, all for Thy Glory! Our good Master, our sovereign Lord, our sacred Spouse, our gracious Saviour, our eternal Companion! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou now and for ever!

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!
Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

XXII

USHAHKEERTHAN.

(1917)

My Father, my Lord, why hast Thou brought this choir to my door? Why hast Thou tended their feet to this deserted, desolate house? Have they come to torture me or to soothe me, to castigate me or to comfort me, to fan the burning fire or to quench the consuming flame within me? Thou alone knowest. They have opened the day with the psalm of Thy praise, with the anthem of Thy glory, with the hymn of Thy mercy, with the hosanna of Thy holiness. May they enjoy the day, as they have begun it, in adoring and worshipping Thee!

I thank Thee that Thou dost not forget, Thou dost not abandon, even this outcast, even this vile sinner. Thou followest me, Thou pursuest me, to reclaim me, to regain me, to regenerate me. Thy compelling love, Thy constraining love, Thy conquering love—to that I appeal. The morning-

star has risen, but in my heart there is no star, no gleam. Thy light has begun to pervade the world, and yet it reacheth not my heart. Am I a beast of prey or am I a demon, that I alone should recede and retire into darkness as the whole world awakens and advances into light? Is my heart alone outside Thy kingdom of life and light? Am I the only exile from the mansions of my Father's house? Grant, oh grant, I implore Thee, that I too may join the procession or even follow the pilgrims from a distance. May this day be the most glorious in the records of Thy mercy, even as it has brought the first gleam of hope unto this most reprobate sinner! Thou hast again and again been sung and proclaimed as the avowed, the tireless Champion of the vilest and the most abandoned of sinners. Be the regeneration of this sinner one fresh instance of Thy reclaiming mercy, of Thy saving grace! Bless these, Thy children, with the richest gifts of the Spirit, and do Thou take a clement, compassionate view of my own sins and in-

iquities—many and grave though they be! Thou the pitiful, I the helpless ! I seek shelter at Thy holy feet. Bless Thou the whole world. May the whole world be blessed in Thee !

Om ! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !

XXIII
NAMAKARANAM*
(1913)

Hymn—*Anandamritha Namah* (Telugu).

Thou the Spring of life, Thou the Life-giver, Thou the Light that shineth in and through every soul, Thou the central Luminary from which rays forth every life with all its powers, we render thanks unto Thee that even into this small household there has entered Thy blessing of new light—the light of reciprocal love, the light of pure enjoyment, the light of intensified attachment, the light of sanctified fidelity, the light of out-looking hope, the light of far-seeing providence, the light of close-watching care, the light of tender nursing and affectionate fondling. We render thanks unto Thee, Thou benign, ever-merciful, ever-provident, ever-clement God! Thou the ready receiver of, and Thou the rich response unto, all our prayers, why dost Thou deign, how is it that

* Of Mr. V. V. L. Narasimharao's son as *Prabhakar*.

Thou, the mighty, majestic sovereign Lord of all, condescendest, to come down to listen to our humble prayers, to hearken to our lowly supplications, to grant our little requests, to vouchsafe the dear desires of our hearts? Not that Thou mightest win our praise and gratitude, earn our thankfulness and benediction, but solely and eternally because Thou carest for, Thou art solicitous of, our all-absorbing joy, delight, happiness, rapture and ecstasy. Thou canst not, Thou wilt not, Thou choosest not to, stand by and leave us alone in all our struggles. Thou willest, Thou choosest, Thou yearnest to enter into, to feel a direct concern in, intimately to associate Thyself with, all our little needs and wants, toils and endeavours. Such is Thy intimate interest in Thy creatures, such Thy unfailing solicitude about them that they report themselves, address themselves, to Thee and seek their satisfaction and fulfilment in Thee alone Thou art always willing, ever ready, cheerfully prompt; nay, Thou dost long anticipate

our needs, and wants. Oh Beloved One, how can we adequately thank Thee? Is it not sufficient unto Thee that each object grows by itself and not in a chain of antecedents and consequences? Even as bubbles rise by themselves on the surface of the deep, may we not spring into existence on the surface of Thy illimitable life? But no; Thou wouldst not only multiply life but also generate love. Thou designest not merely the increase in numbers but also the intensity of life and love. Thus Thou createst this thrice-happy relationship of parent and child. Seemingly standing aloof, Thou art really planning, designing, shaping, ushering, guiding, completing, blessing the whole process of life—individual life, family life, communal life, national life, universal life, all-inclusive, all-comprehensive life. We render thanks unto Thee as Thou hast brought Thyself once again to our homes and hearts and souls as the Giver of light, as the Vouchsafer of light, as the Parent-Source and Eternal Spring of light, the indwelling

light, the in-flowing light, the outpouring light, the flooding light, the illumining light. Do Thou deign to receive our grateful acknowledgment of Thy blessing.

Do Thou bless the blessing which Thou hast vouchsafed. May this little light which Thou hast lit be purified, intensified perennially fed, everlastingly amplified by Thy grace and mercy, sustained, strengthened, sanctified, blessed by Thy Spirit! May the light that dwells in the babe spread about him, shine through him, go forth from him! May he be the bringer of light and the harbinger of peace and truth—Thine own chosen messenger! And as the devout parent of a noble servant of Thine prayed by the bed of his child and invoked Thy blessing on him, as he named him Luther, that he might be the light-bearer, so may our dear *Prabhakar* be the light-bearer into our dear congregation and community—not the light that startles but the light that cheers, not the light that criticises but the light that convinces, not the light that searches out faults but the light

that sheds its gleam over dark spots and illumines them ! May he be the harbinger of such light, the morning-star of truth, joy and blessedness ! May this, Thy blessing, be thrice-blessed—blessed in himself, blessing the household which holds him dear and blessing the community in which he needs must grow ! Thus thrice-blessed of Thee, may he bless and glorify Theenow and for ever ! May all the other darlings who from time to time have come amidst us grow in Thy light and become guiding gleams and shining spirits of Thy light and illumine all corners of the universe ! We invoke Thy blessing on the growing generation, growing in trust, in hope, in strength, in pure and pious resolves.

Blessed, blessed, blessed be the Lord of all light, the light that leads, the light that cheers, the light that illumines, the light in which we live and love, the light in which we would be merged in eternal life ! Blessed be the Lord of Light for ever and ever !*Om* ! *Santhih* ! *Santhih* ! *Santhih* !

XXIV

§ IN MEMORIAM.

(1916)

Lord God ! We would approach Thee on this sacred day in reverential remembrance of Thy saint, profund in the wisdom of the Spirit, blessed with the direct vision of Thy Holy Presence; — a rare type of an illumined, hallowed soul wholly occupied in Thy sweet communion. An exemplary life—remarkable for having seen, known, felt and enjoyed Thee to a degree incomparable in these latter days—Thou hast presented unto our admiring gaze in this, Thy saint, the illustrious Maharshi. We remember him on this day with whole-hearted gratitude and soul-deep reverence unto Thee. Blessed be Thy name ! How his life has been a noble pattern of transcendent truth, of free-flowing goodness, of prophetic vision, of inspiring sanctity, of enrapturing ecstasy ! How Thou hast been the vital sap of that glorious life, as

§ Maharshi Devedranath Tagore.

it grew and spread out into a most sublime manifestation of heavenly grace! We that fancied, in our purblind folly, that it was only a self-centred life sequestered from a liberalising world—we now realise that verily it has been a most fertile seed-bed of Thine own regenerating Spirit; which imparted the benediction of a revivified life to a number of fainting hearts. Unto doubting minds how reassuring, unto world-wearied souls how re-invigorating have been his intense devotion, his beatific vision, aud his inspiring message! The topmost mountain-peak cannot approach the height of this towering spiritual genius; the lowest depths of the great main cannot fathom the profound experiences of this heaven-inebriated devotee now recalled and resumed into Thee! How vast the range, how penetrating the insight, how illuminating the inspiration, how winning the example of this gifted son of God! We bless, we praise, we glorify Thee, our all-comprehending, our all-embracing God. Hallowed, hallowed, hallowed be Thy name!

We supplicate Thee, and we implore that, sure and steady, the Maharshi's sanctified life may be reproduced in an ever-increasing cloud of witnesses unto Thy glory. We do trust that through all eternity will endure and abide in Thee that emanation of Thine own Holy Spirit which took form and dwelt amidst us in the saintly career of our venerated *Pradhanacharya*! May the sovereignty of Thy imperishable Truth, of Thy interminable Love, of Thy immaculate Holiness hold sway over our hearts and souls for ever and ever! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

Om! *Thathsath*!

XXV
CONFERENCE UDBODHAN*
(1916)

We have been brought here, not for man, not for me, not for any other, but for God. We are met here solely and wholly for our God. We are here to feast direct from the bosom of our Divine Mother. From the days of Rajah Rammohan Roy, the Brahma Samaj has been a worshipping family—not a philosophical school, not a philanthropic band of mercy, but a worshipping family of sinning, sorrowing, trusting, aspiring adorers. Even as on the day (in 1830) when the memorable Trust-deed was promulgated to the world, these " meeting-places " are meant for the worship and the adoration of the eternal, immutable, beautiful, adorable God. This is the worshipping religion, this is the adoring faith, this is the singing and praising *dharma*. We are a family of

* At the Andhra Theistic Conference, Masulipatam, (19-11-1916).

adorers. We are come to the common feast of love and worship. Mine is all thine; thine is all mine. If thou art served, I am filled: if I am served, thou art filled; if all of us are served and filled, God is glorified. If God is bountiful, we are blessed. Thus we are a family of worshippers, a fraternity of adorers. Aye, we are meant, every one of us, every person, every living being is meant, has been created, for the worship of God. My hands, thy hands; my eyes, thy eyes; my powers, thy powers—pardon the presumption which differentiates 'my and thy'—these are given to us, evolved in us, conjured up in us, by God Himself for worship and adoration. He seeks our worship, not as the praise-loving God, but as the tender, watchful Mother unto whom the lisp of the child is the music of deep affection, the revelation of profound love, the gospel of all-absorbing devotion. He seeks not merely the offerings of our gratitude, not merely the praise of His greatness, but the worship of Himself for His own sake. For, mark you, He

is the Divine Charmer ! Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The whole body is athrill with the touch of His holy presence. Heads bowed, hands folded, tongues fluent, ears enraptured, eyes ravished, minds aglow, hearts transported, souls enchanted, we are an adoring fraternity, a worshipping family of God.

And wherein lies the fulness, the totality, the quintessence of worship ? Our revered *Pradhanacharya*, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, has happily defined it for us in inspired words which a beloved one of mine reminded us of last night, '*Thasminpreethih thasya priya karya sadhanancha thadupasana meva.*' Not mere sedate love, but a rejoicing, revelling emotion of rapture and ecstasy for His own enchanting sake and the practice, again and again, during our whole lives. of exercises and disciplines in and through acts dear unto Him, acts loved of Him, acts rendered as offerings to Him, the Best Beloved—these constitute *upasana* : sitting near Him, aye, in His lap ! *Thasminpreethih* : Oh ! the bless-

ing, the beatitude of loving Him—that is the ninth heaven beyond the eight paradises, as a Sufi has it. *Thasminpreethih*: let us prayerfully endeavour to realise it and treasure it in our hearts, this lovely morning. Loving Him, caressing Him, rejoicing in Him, going into ecstatic delight in adoration of Him—this is the pure, concentrated essence, the vital central truth, of worship—loving Him for His own sake; loving Him who is Loveable, loving Him who is Love itself.

Love begets love. We love Him; He loves us: that is the complete current of love. God needs us, draws us together closer and closer; and we feel welded together. I cannot give Him up; He will not give me up. Even the all-sufficing God needs me, feels a want without me. What am I? A destitute, pauper, orphan, absolute bankrupt, if I have Him not! My beloved One! Perish the thought, for ever perish the dread possibility, of being without Thee! I want Thee. I cannot live without Thee. Without Thee life becomes not

merely empty but simply impossible—denuded, eviscerated, completely hollowed out, nought but a name, a dream, a passing mist, a fading nothing. With Thee, having Thee, my beloved God, what shall I lack? Yes! In spite of my sins, notwithstanding my revolt, though these many years I have averted my face and withheld my heart from Thee, Thou *hast* been lurking in a corner of my heart, even my dark heart, oh! my beloved God; and that, not for any lingering merit in me but wholly from Thy clinging love. Thou wouldst not go away, even when Thou wert told to be gone; Thou wouldst not desert me even when I wantonly dismissed Thy presence! That eternal law of love which sustains me in spite of my insolent violation of it—that unfailing law of love compasseth my salvation. Beloved God! Thou, Thou art the dear object of my love. *Thasminpreethih*: The love of Him for His own sake—that is the very soul, the pure spirit, of worship. Think not, my brethren, I am attempting to teach it to you. I know you

know it. Pardon me, I only remind you of it. Love is not gratitude for liberal benefits, not admiration for transcendent wisdom, not reverence for unspotted holiness, not confidence in unfailing providence, not obedience to sovereign will, not assent to infallible truth; but love—true love, pure love, simple love—consists in adoring God as the Beautiful One, as the Charming One, so entrancing, so enrapturing alike to the eye and to the heart, for Himself, for His own dear and holy sake, even as He is half veiled behind and half revealed through His universal manifestation which we call *viswam*. We love Him for His own sake. And love banishes all ideas and motives that are low, while those that are good, wise, noble and holy are all comprised in that one divine sentiment, Love. Love, love, love—that is something purer, holier, more comprehensive, more disinterested, more engaging, more absorbing, than all the other sentiments of obedience, trust, gratitude and reverence. It is love which declares, 'He and I are suffi-

cient unto each other.' Let the world be dissolved into the elements. Let the rainbow fade into darkness. Let music be hushed in silence or even confounded into jarring discord. Let the smiling landscape be blasted into a volcanic eruption. I and my God are sufficient unto each other, heart applied to heart, soul clinging to soul, embracing each the other. I love God, God loves me: this is true worship. This love is all-inclusive. It is purer than flawless holiness, surer than unerring wisdom, stronger than irresistible omnipotence, richer than inexhaustible goodness. Love, as the fundamental instinct or impulse—the ceaseless vital breath of the soul—is imperishable, immortal. It is a treasure of ecstatic experience—even that of an uncalculating, unhesitating, unwavering, self-surrendering devotion which is prior and superior to all holiness and all righteousness. So let us embrace our God, cling to His feet and find in Him all that we need and all that we are to attain now and for evermore. *Om! Harih Om!*

XXVI
THE SPIRIT INDWELLING.
(1916)

"God is immanent in all things, in whatsoever lives and moves in the universe: enjoy, therefore, without being attached; covet not wealth belonging to others."—*Isopanishad.*

This text has a noteworthy and gratefully remembered place in the history of the Brahma Samaj. While he was passing through the severest mental and spiritual transition of life, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore chanced upon a leaf of the Upanishads accidentally blown in by the wind. He picked it up, showed it to the family priest and requested him to read that leaf of Sanskrit matter and tell him, on his return, what it was about. The priest read it but could not make much of it. When the Maharshi returned home and made enquiries, the priest said he could not expound the lore. "What shall I do?" asked Devendranath. "I do not know; they of the Brahma Samaj may tell

you. Send for Ramachendra Vidya vageesh, and he will tell you." Ramachendra Vidyavageesh, the direct spiritual successor of Rajah Rammohan Roy and the faithful and hopeful soul that sustained and kept alive through several years the little light the departing hand of the Rajah had lit, said, "This is from the *Isopanishad*" Thereafter, Devendranath took vigorously to the study of the Upanishads. He was absorbed in it. He was so possessed with the spirit of the Upanishads that the father, one of the immediate companions of the Rajah, raised the complaint—I dare say, echoed in many a home in our days—"Devendranath is hopelessly gone: always Brahma and Brahma Samaj!"; till Devendranath, to avoid the unpleasantness of annoying the father, had to meet the Pandit in a printing press.

This little episode in the annals of the Brahma Samaj goes to show on what spirtual food the soul of the Brahma Samaj has fed all along and what importance we

give to this noble, hoary message that the whole universe is indwelt by the spirit of God, the message which presents God as the indwelling Spirit, the vitalising Life, the illuminating Light, the inspiring Oracle, the sanctifying Grace, of the universe, radiating out from the very centre through all its illimitable expression and variegated evolution. It is the clear consciousness, the direct perception, the immediate knowledge, the felt contact, the personal experience, the enraptured enjoyment of God that the Brahma Samaj seeks to realise and, in all brotherly humility, to invite others to share in. This opening text, very brief but very pregnant, of the *Isopanishad* is the bounding, rejoicing expression of a soul that has seen and felt and enjoyed the eternal, all-comprehensive truth that the whole universe is indwelt by the Spirit of God and that we live by, and thrive on, what the self-denying God imparts out of Himself, His very Holy Spirit, for bringing us into *Being* in Him and fostering us towards *Becoming* His forever

XXVII

JOY ABOUNDING.

(191)

Readings—*Kabir's Poems* (Tagore) :LXXXII

Kabir ponders and says: "He who has neither caste nor country, who is formless and without quality, fills all space." The Creator brought into being the Game of Joy: and from the word Om the Creation sprang.

The earth is His joy; His joy is the sky; His joy is the flashing of the sun and the moon; His joy is the beginning, the middle and the end; His joy is eyes, darkness and light.

Oceans and waves are His joy: His joy the Saraswati, the Jumna and the Ganges.

. The Guru is One: and life and death, union and separation, are all His plays of joy! His play the land and water, the whole universe! His play the earth and sky! In play is the Creation spread out, in play it is established. The whole world, says Kabir, rests in His play, yet still the Player remains unknown.

Such is the experience, the surging, irrepressible, as it were, the self-revealing experience of him who has seen *Anandam* at the centre, the core, the heart, the fountain – head of the universe. Where is the possibility, the bare conceivability, of the coming into being of any creature unless the all-investing sky and the all-sustaining earth be brimful of joy ? Even as the universe is replete, redolent with joy, aught of existence is possible.

Where there is joy, there must be direct communion. Where there is joy, there must be ceaseless intercourse. Where there is joy, there is a holy love which gives even to the most insignificant and neglected of objects a value which cannot be estimated by any human calculation. Where there is the joyful realisation of God, there all that comes of God, lives in God, moves and has its being in God, is received as joy, welcomed as the offspring of joy, hailed as the evangel of joy, embraced as the incarnation of joy. Thus all, all is joy. The earth beneath is His joy. The sky

above is His joy. Oceans and waves are His joy. The myriad objects which make the world beautiful are, again, the bodying forth of His joy. Every flower and every brook is the laughter of His joy. Every sounding grove is the music of His joy. The glowing dawn and the rising morn are the first gleams of His returning joy. The retiring sun with golden sheen in the west is His retreating joy to reappear. Thus day and night are but His alternating joy. Spring and summer, autumn and winter, are His revolving joy. Man is but the little ray that has emerged from the central glow of His joy. The father is the over-looking joy, the mother the embracing joy, brother or sister the twin-born joy, teacher or preceptor the self-reproducing joy, comrade or colleague the self-sharing joy, husband or wife the self-gifting joy, daughter or son the self-perfecting joy. Thus all is *Anandam* within and without.

This God of *Anandam* visits us not merely to invite us to Him, not that He might only assure or cheer us, but that he might

give and impart Himself unto us. As Maharshi Devendranath Tagore has said, "I am satisfied but He has given so much. But He is not satisfied with having given so little." All give of their possessions, all spare from their portion; but He gives Himself. Let go the world and the world lets you go. Let go God and God pursues you all the keener. Herein lies God's insistent, indefatigable, irrepressible concern for, and interest in, us. Yes! This is the supreme assurance, this the sovereign truth, we proclaim—here and now, truly and verily, God is incarnate. There is no place and no time, no-where and no-when, no object, however small, no concern, however insignificant, but is directly occupied, pervaded, possessed by the spirit of God. Proclaim it, not with the philosophic pride that exalts imperfection into perfection, but with the disciple's humble and grateful heart as the guaranteed hope and preordained destiny of all. Thou, brother, thou, sister, thou and myself the sinner, however fallen now, are the shrine and

shekinah of the Spirit of God. God dwelleth, the Supreme God resideth, the Majestic God has His throne, the Righteous God has His shrine, the Loving God has His home, the Wise God has His *ashrama* in the spirit of each one of us. And it is granted unto each one of us to say, "In me, too, for no merit of mine, the Eternal chooseth to abide, the Infinite chooseth to reside, the All-holy chooseth to be enshrined." Thus even for me, the vilest sinner, there is hope of redemption and salvation vouchsafed by the All-merciful God as a free gift of His loving grace. He has deigned to choose me, to capture me, to possess me, despite all frailties, ignoring all iniquities. This is the message of living religion—God the Saviour, man the soul to be saved and sanctified–sure as science, subtle as philosophy, nourishing as faith, illuminating as grace, vivifying as life. This is the message of the Brahma Samaj. Blessed be the God of *Anandam*!

APPRECIATIONS
AND
REMINISCENCES.

XXVIII

SREE CHAITANYA.

(1886)

History is pre-eminently a revelation of God; for, nowhere, perhaps, are the wisdom and goodness of a Divine Providence so manifest as in the apt and timely investment of talents and virtues in the accomplishment of its mysterious dispensations. "Lives of great men all remind us" that there is an ever-watchful Divinity in History that moulds our destinies from good to better and thence to best; that, "or in the natal or the mortal hour," holds us safe under the protection of its wise and benignant power. In the brilliant deviation of a solitary soul from the rank corruption of its age and land; in the enthusiastic life of a patriot who saves a sinking state and resuscitates its shattered energy; in the glorious career of an awe-inspiring prophet who recalls a wandering nation to the lawful ways of God and

Truth, the thoughtful student of History reads a lesson far more instructive and impressive than all that sages can teach. There—amidst the roll of drums and the blare of trumpets, despite carnage and destruction—he discerns an almighty plan which has been constantly piloting the world towards justice, righteousness and unity. There he distinctly discerns that the current of events is not a sport of chance but that "through the ages one increasing purpose runs," and that an all-guiding finger has been incessantly writing the grand epic of our salvation.

Four centuries ago, the religious life of Bengal was at a very low ebb. The country was sunk in the depths of superstition and immorality. The little faction of Vaishnavas, weak and limited as it was, had lost its hold on the pristine purity of Vaishnava doctrines, and had degenerated into a class noted for extravagant rites and meaningless ceremonies. The people were mostly votaries of Saktaism. Originally a most harmless and thoughtful wor-

ship of the Deity's creative power or force, Saiktaism had in course of time been defiled into a very repulsive creed notorious for unnameable indecency and immorality. Wine and woman were the poison and pestilence of the day. In the name of all that is noble and virtuous in human nature, acts of an extremely vicious and degrading character were committed in clear day-light. The roseate hues of early Saktaism had faded into darkness. Religion had been drawn through mire and slime and at last gibbeted on the scaffold of the most nefarious acts. Was there no hope to dawn upon Bengal? Were unborn generations doomed to be swept away into the vortex of Tantric charms, nocturnal revels and Bacchanalian orgies? The learned man of the day to whom the few saints in Sodom looked up for help and guidance was himself in sad need of life and light. Stricken by a morbid pride of his erudition, he deemed it the aim and ambition of life to discomfit a learned foe and to successfully thread his way through the

most intricate questions that interested few and benefited none. To pass for a learned dialectician was the be-all and the end-all of his existence. His constitution was an entire stranger to that persuasive meekness, that calm earnestness and that ennobling purity, which are the salient features of a religious teacher. The Vaishnavas he scorned; and the Saktas he ignored. Religion was beneath his dignity. He was indifferent to the moral and spiritual mell-being of his fellow-men. All hope seemed to be lost; the whole prospect looked dreary. Bengal was longing for truth and righteousness, when relief came from a most unexpected quarter. How and whence we will see presently.

India has always been noted for her bent towards religion. That such was the case even in the pre-historic ages is amply proved by the rich legacy bequeathed to us by our ancestors; while History from its very dawn testifies to this fact. But with the close of that long campaign which defeated and expelled Buddhism; and with

the Mahammedan conquest of the country, when the cherished ideas and hoary traditions of the nation were rudely shaken, a scorching gale would seem to have passed over the verdant religious face of India. The popular mind was unhinged and unsettled. A living faith, entering into the daily concerns of the masses, ceased to be current. Abstruse Pantheism and austere Saivism were not wanting. But a demonstrative religion, calculated to appeal to the populace, was evidently conspicuous by its absence. Dull rites and unintelligible observances were the thin mildew thrown out to the hungry millions. A creed potent enough to disturb the lethargy and rouse the latent energy of the nation was, therefore, imminently necessary. And no religion was, perhaps, better fitted to answer the purpose of the day than Vaishnavism. Remarkable for its lofty doctrine of *bhakti* (devotion) and for its ethical code which, "amidst much abasement," has a golden core of nobility, Vaishnavism was, we believe, the needed dispensation of the

times; and with almost the force of an instinct, the nation turned towards that religion. And with the hour came the men. Ramanujacharya and Madhavacharya had already proclaimed the gospel of Vaishnavism in Southern India. Vallabhacharya —that noble epicure of India, whose lofty doctrines have, like those of his western prototype, been woefully abused by his unworthy followers—was shaking the firmament of Western India with his earnestness and eloquence. Ramanand and other sages had carried the faith to Northern India. It would, therefore, have been a strange exception, had Bengal remained unreached by this new spirit. That province was moreover, as we have just attempted to show, in urgent need of relief from the excesses of Saktaism. Benign Providence at last thought fit to vouchsafe a harbinger of peace and light; and on the stage of Bengal appeared the immortal Saint of Nuddea.

Chaitanya, the apostle of Vaishnavism in Bengal, was born at Navadweepa (Nud-

dea), in 1485 of the Christian Era; and was, therefore, two years younger than that immortal champion of Christian Protestantism, Martin Luther.* Portents and miracles have always heralded a great man into the world. Nature is supposed to rejoice at the advent of a noble soul, by breaking through its law and uniformity. Chaitanya was in the womb for thirteen months. The termination of an eclipse coincided with the first dawn of the future saint. The leader of the existing *Vaishnava* cult and his future disciple, Advaitacharya, visited the infant sage with presents. But we can well afford to pass by these extraordinary incidents and turn to the more lasting glories of this inspired life,

* It may incidentally be mentioned that in his eloquent lecture on Chaitanya (*Speeches, Vol. I*) Babu Surendranath Banerjee says, "He was thus two years older than another great reformer, Martin Luther." With the learned lecturer this might have been a mere *lapsus lingnoe*; but the Editor should, in our humble opinion, have corrected or pointed out the slip, insignificant and evident as it is. It is found in both the editions through which the speeches have passed.

The family was one of Vaidic Brahmans and originally belonged to Sylhet. But in the days of the grandfather, Upendra Misra, the old man, impelled by a sacred desire to be close by the holy waters of the Bhagiradhi, had migrated with his family to Nuddea, which was even then a great seat of Sanskrit learning. Jagannadha Misra and Sachi Devi, the daughter of Nilambar Chakravarti, were the blessed parents of the future saviour of Bengal. After his acquiring the rudiments of the Bengali language, Chitanya was sent to a Sanskrit School where his eager study and striking precocity were the wonder and admiration of all. To the father, however, the blossoming genius of the son was not a welcome sign. An elder son, Viswarupa, had shunned the world and become a Vaishnava ascetic, after having attained to a high proficiency in Sanskrit. And the loving parent was naturally anxious for the future of his younger son. From the Sanskrit School, Chaitanya passed over to a *quasi*-College of Sanskrit where the *Dar-*

sanas (Systems of Hindu Philosophy) were the main subjects of instruction. The youth became a learned Pandit within a limited period; and at the death of the father, which happened rather early, Chiatanya opened a Sanskrit School of his own. The vast learning of the teacher attracted the attention of all, and from the neighbouring towns and villages pupils came, in large numbers, into the new seat of learning. Chaitanya's fame spread far and wide. On all hands, he was invited by the nobles and chiefs of the country and honoured with costly presents. However, the thriving Pandit was in matters of religion but a faithful bird of the flock. Not unlike his brethren in learning, Chaitanya would appear, at this time of his life, to have been little troubled by thoughts of religon or by ideas of regenerating his country. The learned men of the day, it is said, were supremely indifferent to all spiritual concerns. Indeed, they would go the length of holding up the Vaishnavas to the scorn and ridicule of others ; and Chaitanya was by

no means the last in doing so.

But the time was fast approaching when there was to be a sudden and thorough change in Chaitanya's life; when, so to speak, the scorning Saul of the Vaishnavas was to be regenerated into the enthusiastic St. Paul of Vaishnavism. An epoch of religious indifference was to be followed by an epoch of religious ferment. Chaitanya, along with some of his pupils, visits Gaya, to a place long renowned for the countless pilgrims that constantly resorted to it and for its magnificent temples dedicated to Vishnu. Here he encounters a recluse named Eswarapoorie, whose elequent words and austere life convert Chaitanya Vishnavism. Edified by the burning words of the anchorite, Chaitanya forgot the world with all its charms and fascinations; and would fain have spent the rest of his life at Gaya; but a second thought recommended a return to his native place.

Fanned into enthusiasm by his conversation, Chaitanya was, after his return, always in the company of Vaishnavas,

feelingly chanting the sweet name of Hari. An imposing presence, it is said, always danced before his eyes; and the name of Hari constantly rang in his ears. The world faded away into empty nothingness. His task by day and rest by night was an enthusiastic singing of the praise and glory of Hari. But after a time, at the earnest request of his friends, Chaitanya reopened his school, but only to close it once for all. On the first day of the reopening, he completely digresses from the topic on hand. "Hari," he bursts out all of a sudden, "is the soul of all the sastras. Hari is the Almighty Being. Theirs is a fruitless task who endeavour to acquire knowledge without the helping grace of Hari. The learning of the so-called Pandits, unleavened by love of Hari, is like the load carried by an ass. Too much learning breeds pride in them; and pride goeth before a fall. But an unlettered man led by his love for Hari, finds a royal road to Heaven. I exhort you therefore to give yourselves up to Hari." The

pupils were taken aback. They appreciated the teaching; they rejoiced at the change in their master. The latter, when he regained self-possession, found out that he had made a thorough deviation; but was unable to proceed with the lesson for the day. On the day following, he repairs to the school with a firm resolve to fare better but, to his utter confusion, falls into a longer digression. At last, discerning his inability to be a man of the world any longer, he takes leave of his pupils with many a touching exhortation and goes forth to devote his days and nights to Hari. Some of his pupils faithfully followed him into his new life ; while the rest repaired to other schools. The Vaishnavas sent up their thankful praises to Hari that one of the foremost among the learned had stooped to advocate their humble cause. The Pandits of the day were satisfied that a great rival was thus removed. And the Saktas were enraged that so rich an acquisition was made to the contemptuous number of their bitter foes.

Chaitanya formally renounced the world. A solemn and unmistakable protest had to be made against the degrading sensuality of Saktaism. On the sacred altar of duty he immolated the all-holy filial and conjugal ties. In his own person, Chaitanya set a noble example, for others to note and to follow, of unsparing self-sacrifice and unflinching patriotism. The loving mother might rend the sky with her sobs, the affectionate wife might break her heart in despair; but Brutus can never love Caesar more and Rome less. He set his face stern against all other considerations; and in response to the call of love became an ascetic. Such asceticism may, as a general rule, be objectionable; but the smaller of two inevitable evils must always be preferred; and Chaitanya did this. Now began that famous Sankeerthan which is indissolubly associated with the saint's name and has, since his time, become, with every religionist, a favourite method of preaching a creed. With the praise and glory of Hari on their

tongues and with an enthusiastic clapping of hands, Chaitanya and his followers roamed over the streets of Nuddea, inviting one and all to devote their lives to Bhakti. At first, the terror of the Saktas compelled Chaitanya to hold nocturnal meetings; from which we may well infer the difficulty of his position. But with the advent of fresher members and with the increase of earnest faith, the saint boldly pushed himself into public view and asserted his claim to be heard and accepted. For a full year, he continued to be the sole leader of the cause, when a very valuable addition was made in the person of Chaitanya's famous disciple, Nityananda. Of the same age and temperament as Chaitanya, Nityananda was but an *alter ego* of his leader in piety and earnestness. Sankeerthan was performed with all the greater enthusiasm. Thousands of persons were converted to the renewed faith. The star of Vaishnavism was cheeringly in the ascendant in Bengal. And at this time Chaitanya took a most daring step which entitles him to

the lasting gratitude of posterity. Himself placed on the highest step of the social ladder, this Brahman of Brahmans made bold to wage a crusade against caste. He convened a meeting of his friends and followers to consider the question. Among the assembly was a Mahammedan convert, Haridas by name, who had renounced the faith of his fathers but could not, owing to caste prejudices, get recognition among the Vaishnavites. Touched by the moving example of this devotee, who has since come to be ranked among the early sages of Vaishnavism, and roused by the glowing words of Chaitanya, the assembly accepted the lofty position that" the mercy of God regards no tribe or family " and that the division into castes was an iniquitous distinction. To us, who live in an advanced age, the rare boldness of the step may not be quite patent. But when we remember that Chaitanya lived in the dark ages of Indian History, when caste was riding rampant over Hindu society, when vested interests and conflicting ambitions

aided and abetted the worst prejudices of the people, the immortal saint of Nuddea stands forth, encircled by a halo of glory, as one of the most dauntless heroes the world has ever produced. Nothing but a most unshaking faith in the triumph of truth, nothing but an unflinching courage of conviction, could have achieved the easy victory over an inveterate foe that has been baffling the richest resources of some of the most accomplished sons of India. Let Chaitanya's degenerate countrymen, in all shame, confess to themselves that, with one bold stroke, a solitary ascetic could eradicate what they all hate yet embrace, abhor yet fondle. Let succeeding generations, when they shall have wiped out this pestilence from the country, yield the crown of glory to one who, long before their appearance, had achieved their victory. Soon after this renunciation of caste, Chaitanya suggested to his followers the advisability of preaching the faith from door to door ; and the noble work was at once taken up by Nitya-

nanda and Haridas—the Mahammedan convert. The result was the conversion of several thousands, among whom were two most hopelessly lost characters, Jogai and Mathai. Those who would test the efficacy of a faith by its regenerating effect on depraved persons, pause here and note that every faith has that undercurrent of truth which, if found out and followed, will surely carry one to the haven of bliss. Besides Sankeerthan, Chaitanya introduced another method of attracting the people. This was Jattra, a kind of theatrical performance in which the sage himself would take a prominent part and by his rousing words animate the audience into religious zeal.

Chaitanya was now twenty-five years old. He had done his duty by his native place; and the time was come when he should carry the torch to the benighted wanderers in other parts of the country. Accompanied by Nityananda and some other followers, the saint leaves for Orissa. At Pooree he makes a most remarkable con

version, which paves the way for a free progress of Vaishnavism in that Province. A specimen of the learned class and a renowned Pandit attached to the court of the ruler of Orissa, Sarvabhowma Bhattacharya pledged himself to regain the learned Chaitanya from the wild fanaticism of religion. Counting upon his deep knowledge of the Darsanas, he was sure of a victory. But the little David, with his sling and stone of faith, is more than a match for any Goliath. The Pandit goes out to convince and returns converted. Baffled by Chaitanya's array of arguments and moved by his glowing words and inspiring life, Sarvabhowma saw the sacred truth that, not by learning, not even by laudable acts, but by child - like faith and wife - like devotion alone, can a man know the great Lord of all. The Pandit's conversion proclaimed the fame of Chaitanya all over the country ; and people courted his discipleship in endless numbers. From Orissa, the saint travelled into the Deccan. „ Remote, unfriended, " the lonely pilgrim

made his way to Setubundh Rameswar. Wherever he went, his sacred presence was a compelling call to the people to bow down to him and join his faith. From Rameswar, Chaitanya retraced his steps to Madras ; where, it is said, he had a conversation with several Pandits. Thence he found his way, through dangerous tracts, into the Deccan ; and passing over the Western Presidency and Guzarat and visiting various places of renown and interest, returned to Pooree after several years. His arrival there was marked with a joyous welcome from his disciples. Vaishnavas from different parts of Bengal repaired to Pooree in large numbers to get a sight of their leader. The king of Orissa himself solicited a visit ; but what has a recluse to do with the pomp of royalty? Undaunted by a cold reply, the king personally repairs to the sage in a Vaishnava's dress and touches the saint's feet in all humility. Moved by this depth of piety, Chaitanya cordially embraces the visitor ; but his wonder is simply to be imagined

when he learned that the new-comer was himself the king. Pratapa Rudra thenceforth became a devout follower of Chaitanya.

The saint's next journey was to Bengal. When at the village of Ram Kali, near Gour, the capital of Bengal, Chaitanya was asked to preach. He consented to do so. Among the audience were two Mahammedans of influential position, upon whom the discourse produced such talismanic effect that instantly they renounced their religion and embraced Vaishnavism. They resigned the high posts they held, distributed their wealth among the poor and followed Chaitanya. As Vaishnavas, they figure under the names of Roopa and Sanathana. If there was one thing more daring than violating the dictates of caste, it was this conversion. By an express order of the paramount Government, it had been ruled that whosoever allured a Mahammedan to change his faith was liable to summary death. But what panoply is securer than an uncorrupt conscience; "what

stronger breast-plate than a heart untainted?" He who had staked his all in the name of duty, he who had ventured his life into the most obscure and perilous parts of the country for the sake of his Hari, was little likely to be daunted by the cruel orders of a bigot. "He whose trust is God little fears death." In this degenerate age—the era of hypocrisy, of brag and bluster—every frown of a relative, every taunt of a friend, produces an apostate. But the great men of all countries have been made of sterner stuff. With them to think is to say, to say is to do. May we tread in their footsteps! From Gour Chaitanya goes to Santipur, and thence returns to Pooree.

But a restless soul anxious to sow peace over a nation can never relish rest and enjoyment. He sets out for Madhura to behold the sacred haunts of his favourite God, Krishna. But the simple-minded have in all ages followed the saintly in perplexing numbers. The immense mass of people that accompanied him on his way to

Brindavan rendered it impossible for Chaitanya to proceed any distance. He had to postpone the journey for a time; and when he finally satisfied his desire, he could do so only by resorting to obscure and unknown paths. On his way to Madhura, he visited Benares and Allahabad. After spending a full year amidst the classic scenes of Brindavan, Chaitanya retraced his steps to Orissa. On his way he converted several Pathans, afterwards known as Pathan Vairagees; discomfited the head of the Pantheists at Benares ; and spread Vaishnavism wherever he went.

Chaitanya's return was marked by immense rejoicings among his followers. He was not thirty years of age. The next eighteen years he spent in Orissa, making that Province the chief field of his work. Adwaitacharya and Nityananda were in charge of Bengal ; and Roopa and Sanatan in that of Upper India. Little is known of the sage's life during these eighteen years. The probability is that he spent his days and nights in proclaiming the

glory of Hari, and in converting people to Vaishnavism. But as years passed on, Chaitanya gave signs of mental abstraction. His disciples could perceive it. A certain evening, when the sky was clear, the moon shone in full effulgence and nature presented a most charming appearance. Chaitanya had gone out for his usual walk. Fancying that the Chilka lake was the river Jumna and that the surrounding scenery represented Madhura, he rushed forth to embrace his favourite Krishna and drowned himself in the lake. Some fishermen caught his body in their nets on the following day. Probably this was the closing scene of a glorious life. But his disciples hold that the name of Hari revived the saint, who afterwards mysteriously disappeared from his followers. Whether or not there be any truth in the statement, it is certain that Chaitanya disappeared from the world in the forty-eighth year of his age, in the year

1533* of the Christian Era.

Such was the holy life, and such the glorious work, of one of the noblest souls that this or any other country has ever produced. Springing from a tribe by no means remarkable for physical prowess, Chaitanya achieved those notable victories of peace before which the proudest trophies of war sink into utter insignificance. In that illustrious career, a thoughtful observer may perceive what singleness of purpose, nobility of aim and purity of life, unaided by rank or wealth, can achieve in a score of years. Wherever he went, he took the people's hearts by storm. Whatever he said was caught by the hearers with an eager breath. The pageantries of kings fade into shadowy dreams, when

* This, we believe, is the correct date of the sage's death or final disappearance. But both Babu Surendranath Banerjea *(Speeches, Vol. 1)* and Sir Monier Williams (*Religious Thought and Life in India*) think that the melancholy event took place in 1527 - 28 A. D. The point to be decided is, whether it was only twelve years or, as we say, eighteen years that Chaitanya eventually spent in Orissa.

compared with the truly regal power he wielded over men's minds. Nor was his success, to any extent, due to sailing with the current. In waging war against the all-powerful party of the Saktas; in deviating from the beaten track of the *savants* of the day; in riding rough-shod over caste and other cherished notions of the people; in discomfiting the Pantheists, a sect always in honour among the Hindus, Chaitanya was fighting against immense odds and touching his hearers at the tenderest points. His success was, therefore, entirely due to his genius as a prophet and to the purity of his life. He rose up in war against the favourite fashions of the day; and saved a whole country from decay and death. But, alas, how soon his influence has passed away! While seeing no reason to agree with a learned writer in his statement that " in reality the Vysnub class does not rank high; of men it only gets the refuse of society, and of women prostitutes", we cannot *but regret most sin-

* Rai Sasi Chunder Dutt Bahadur: *Bengal.*

cerely that Chaitanya's spirit has so soon passed away from a vast majority of his followers, leaving them "in a most abject condition of formalism and even immorality". * That the country, "over whose acres walked those blessed feet" that travelled far and wide in proclaiming the doctrine of devotion throughout the length and breadth of the land, should have forgotten so great a benefactor, is simply deplorable. But let us hope and pray that, not only Bengal, but the whole country will work together in reviving the glorious spirit of one who was himself the champion of unity. Let us hope and pray that our countrymen will yet kneel by the tomb of Chaitanya; and, imbibing an iota of his self-sacrifice and earnestness, work incessantly and work without end, until, stripped of all superstition and evry relic of idolatry, India comes to accept that Great God, "the One only without a second", the Father, Mother, Friend and Guide of all; until the flag of Monotheism

* Keshub Chunder Sen: *Essays, Part 1*

is found to wave triumphant over every "village, tower and town" of our beloved fatherland.

XXIX

RAJAH RAJENDRA LAL MITTER AND PANDIT ISWARA CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR. (1891).

From the galaxy of Indian Worthies there have disappeared beyond human ken two most radiant orbs of the very first magnitude. Within four days of each other have ended the illustrious careers here below of two of India's most noted worthies. If the lives of its great men be the most precious treasure of a country, our poor fatherland has had to pay a very heavy tribute, indeed, to the grim old king of "mantle dark and cold" in the departure, almost simultaneously, of one who signally vindicated the intellectual greatness of his nation and the other who was a life-long champion of the social victims of his custom-ridden race. Verily a cloud, a gloom, has passed over the face of Aryavarta; and the entire peninsula mourns the loss of two of the rarest products of this country or age.

RAJAH RAJENDRA LAL MITTER, D.L.,C.I.E., the marvel of his mother-country, "the pride of the sciences of Europe a scholar of world-wide reputation, breathed his last on the 26th July, in his sixty-eighth year. He was descended from one of those historical Kayastha* companions of the five Brahmin families of Kanauj that emigrated into Bengal sometime during the closing ages of the Hindu rule of that province and became the progenitors of the present Kulins. The Rajah's ancestors held, for some generations, high positions under the Moghul sovereigns of the land; and young Rajendra Lal had thus all the advantages that rank and position could afford to the growth and development of those very rare talents with which kind Nature had endowed him and which, when enriched and augmented by his other great qualities, raised him to a very high pedestal of fame. He was a versatile genius

*The Mitras (or Mitters) are Kulin Kayasthas and not, as some of our contemporaries have observed, Kulin Brahmins.

that could master the principles of different sciences. After having tried, with considerable credit, the study of medicine and of law, he chalked out a brilliant career for himself in the investigation of the Ancient History and Archaeology of his country. To excel in the particular life which he chose, he worked hard and honestly for amply equipping himself with all the requisite knowledge; and he thus acquired a command of something like a dozen languages. Thus, in his own chosen life-work the gifted author of the "Buddha-Gaya" and the "Indo-Aryans" stood not only inapproachably ahead of his countrymen working in the same field but also quite abreast with the best scholars of Europe and America; with a good many of whom he was on terms of learned correspondence, measuring swords with some of them occasionally. Apart from his contributions to journals, magazines and "transactions," in which he seemed almost to rival the fertility of a Heyne (as Carlyle reports it), his larger productions are very

numerous.* Several of them are models of patient research, keen comprehension, striking originality, marked independence, lucid exposition and a masterly style. While his wonderful command of the English language wrung out praise from even the bitterest banterers on what is unjustly termed "Babu English," the results of his investigations were valued as a rare achievement by the scholars of the West. He was an honored member of numerous learned Societies and Academies all over the world, and was elected some years ago the President of the Asiatic Society in Bengal, thus rising—and very deservedly, too—to a position analogous to the one held, a century ago, by that linguistic prodigy and large-hearted scholar, Sir W. Jones. The Government conferred upon him the titles of Rajah and C. I. E.; and the Calcutta University, of which he was nominated a Fellow—rather an ambiguous honor in India—conferred upon him the highly-

*According to a contemporary, he wrote 50 works, extending over 128 volumes, consisting of 33,089 pages There was a giant of "the mammoth brood"!

envied distinction of the "honorary" degree of Doctor-in-Law, the only other native of India similarly honored as yet being that erudite but somewhat biassed scholar, the late Rev. K. M. Bannerjea. Thus, respected by his countrymen, honored by the Government, and esteemed by his fellow-*savants*, the illustrious Rajah was "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes."

But even an Achilles may have his vulnerable heel; and the towering genius that could so thoroughly master the most abstruse problems of ancient history could hardly realise the sad social defects of the nation at the present time. He who traced the sociology of by-gone generations with such remarkable success justified the woes and wrongs of our virgin-widows with the specious argument of the numerical equality of the two sexes! In fact, Macaulay's well-known reflection on Johnson may, with almost equal justice, be applied to our "great Cham," that his mind was like the *gin* of the Arabian tale that now, in full freedom, spread out in amazing propor-

tions over land and sea, but anon, under the seal and spell of a pet idea, shrank into a little vessel. However, now that he has "past to where beyond these voices there is peace," let none allow a few "wandering isles of night" to bedim the glory of the "source and fount of day."

Equally great in his own way was PANDIT ISWARA CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR, the darling child of India, the far-famed advocate of widow-marriage; who passed away on the 29th of July, at the ripe age of seventy-one. Born a Brahmin of the very highest sect (a Kulin Bannerjea), he had exceptionally good opportunities for studying the sociology of the Hindus, especially what we may term its dark aspects. Though descended from parents in rather narrow circumstances, he nevertheless had the benefit of a very sound education, in virtue of which he received from the classical Navadweepa (Nuddea) the high title of Vidyasagara. In fact, he was "a gem of purest ray serene" which no obscurity could hide. The native genius

of his soul shone through all disabilities and discouragements. He rose to high distinction in the Government Educational Department. But the glory which it was his to achieve was more of the heart than of the head; it lay more in the depth of affection and the vigour of character than in the height of the intellect. To him was given the noble privilege of following, in more than one respect, in the track of the great Rajah Rammohan Roy; which might, we think, be partly ascribed to his early and intimate association with the famous *Thathvabodhini Sabha*, of which the founder and central figure was that true saint of God, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the Chief Minister (*Pradhanacharya*) of the Indian Theistic Church for the last half-century. And though this connection with the noted *Sabha* ceased after a time in its religious activities, Vidyasagar was always in deep sympathy with the Brahma Samaj in its social reforms. In fact, latterly, losing all confidence in his "orthodox" countrymen, he looked upon that

body as almost the sole reforming agency in the province. A sincere well-wisher of the illiterate, he devoted his time and energy to a vigorous spread of education. Many and various have been the works from his gifted pen ; and such is their worth and such their popularity that, it is said, he had an income of several thousand rupees a month from the sale of his productions. His tender heart always throbbed in rich and living sympathy for those dumb victims of ruthless custom--the fair sex of our country. With unflagging zeal he toiled to emancipate the minds of our women from the thraldom of ignorance and superstition. Through his earnest endeavours several girl-schools were established. To him, we think, has been due to a large extent the stability and success of one of the biggest colleges under Indian management in Calcutta—the Metropolitan Institution. Thus his large income was mostly dedicated to education and philanthropy. However, it was by his heroic exertions in the cause of widow-marriage that Vidyasagar

has come to be known and, at least partly, revered wherever the hard lot of India's ill-starred daughters has been evoking interest and sympathy. So early as 1854 Vidyasagar, then at the head of the Sanskrit College, issued his famous pamphlet in defence of Widow-marriage on *Sastric* grounds This *brochure* was a veritable sling and stone for the Goliaths of orthodoxy. It created an immense sensation. Violent replies poured in from the guardians of our dear old institutions. After much deliberation, Vidyasagar sent out a masterly rejoinder, which has ever since remained practically unanswered. Those who lack some personal experience of the dreadful difficulties of social reform in our own day, after a generation of wide-spread liberal education, can form no idea of the appalling dangers Vidyasagar had to brave in his heroic attack on the strongholds of bigoted conservatism. Verily he was an ocean of sound and fruitful learning. Two years later, while the shade of the coming gloom of the Indian Mutiny was scarcely

perceptible, he prevailed upon the Government to inaugurate a silent, beneficial revolution in Hindu Society by passing the famous Widow-marriage Act ; which, though not very popular as yet, will nonethe-less exercise a very healthy influence on the India-to-be. From theory to practice has ever been a sure and natural transition with all great men ; and Vidyasagar was preeminently great. The first widow-marriage among the higher classes in Modern India—itself the happy harbinger of several others—took place in the historic Sukea Street in the ever-memorable 1865. Nor was his reforming zeal, like Solomon's wisdom, meant only for others. His only son was married to a virgin-widow, in the face of stout domestic opposition; and as a strong protest against those solemn farces, those sad parodies of sacred wedding, the infant marriages of India, he had his own daughters married only when of full age. His efforts to root out the upas-tree of Kulinism and polygamy should have likewise succeeded but

for the turn-coat friends on whom he had relied for support but whose deplorable change of front at the last hour shook his confidence in his countrymen for ever. Thus at the risk or expense of health and wealth, position and popularity, he wrestled almost single-handed with many a social hydra ; and although the monster might have proved too-many-headed for this dauntless Hercules, wherever worth is appreciated, patriotism is esteemed, philanthropy is honored and heroism is revered, the name of Vidyasagar is cherished as that of a noble-minded, tender-hearted and high-souled son of India whose entire life has been one love-offering unto the sons and, especially, the daughters of his mother-country. In enriching his native tongue--in which he takes rank with the honored names of Rammohan Roy, Akshay Kumar Dutt and others, in promoting education among his countrymen, in succouring the poor and relieving the distressed, in weaning the minds of his sisters from the ignorance of generations, in rescuing

the down-trodden widow from "hallowed" social tyranny, and in carrying on a throttling-struggle with the monster of Kulinism which exacted its iniquitous maiden tribute in Bengal, he has set a glorious example of patriotism and benevolence—of nobility of aim, singleness of purpose, unflinching moral courage and far-reaching liberality—which few may feebly match but none can ever surpass. The Government conferred upon him the title of C.I.E., and the Calcutta University the honor of a Fellow; but far more lasting and far wider known than what lies in the virtue of any honor or title, or in the durability of any "storied urn" or "animated bust," will be the immortality of Vidyasagar in the loving hearts and grateful memories of the sons and daughters, for generations to come, of this ancient land for whose intellectual, social and moral progress and happiness he worked throughout his long life with such matchless courage and exemplary disinterestedness.

Such have been the two renowned sons

of India who have just entered the peace that never ends and the glory that never fades. Both were truly learned; both were sincerely patriotic; but each after his own type. The one shed the light of research upon some of the very obscure problems of ancient history; the other carried the light of education and the gleam of hope into the dark caverns of ignorance and the gloomy retreats of misery. And posterity will honor them after their respective merits. With all his valuable services to the Municipality, the University and the British Indian Association of Calcutta, it is mainly as an intellectual luminary that the learned Rajah Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitter will shine in the firmament of fame; while the revered name of the venerable Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar will be bequeathed to the succeeding generations as the type of the good Samaritan (so to speak) in an age and a nation of Pharisees, a saintly life which was one sacred psalm unto the glory of his Maker, and a surpassing love which embraced as "brothers all the hu-

man race.'' And not a few centuries will have elapsed before India may see the "like" of the great Rajendra Lal or the good Iswara Chandra. May these "royal souls" repose in undying happiness in the bosom of the All-Merciful; and may their inspiring examples endure through many an age to come, exercising a most potent influence for high thinking and noble living among their reverent countrymen!

XXX

P. C. MOZOOMDAR'S "LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF KESHUB CHUNDER SEN." (1891)

We beg to acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of a copy of the second edition of Rev. Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar's "Life and Teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen." It is no doubt pleasing to observe that a second edition of this very useful and interesting work has been called for, though we confess we cannot share in the author's "agreeable surprise" at "the rapid sale of the first edition." That a great nation with its more than three millions of educated members took full eighteen months to exhaust a bare thousand copies of an ably written "Life" of one of the most gifted teachers that even this God-inspired land has produced, were a reproach anywhere but in modern India, which is notorious for its stolid indifference to the sacred memory of its "representative men." We cannot under-

stand the remark that the work was comparatively "expensive," when we remember what countless thousands are being lavished upon institutions of doubtful utility, or when we recall from personal observation how our average so-called educated man annually invests much more than the price of a copy of the first edition of this work upon treatises of little elevating tendency and novels teaching very questionable morality. We are, however, glad that a cheaper edition (the price, including postage, of a neat cloth-bound copy being only Rs. 2-2-0) has been brought out. The name of the publishers—the well-known firm of Messrs. Thacker, Spink and Co. of Calcutta—is of course a guarantee of the extremely neat execution of work, though, in our humble opinion, the type, especially that used for the numerous "extracts," might advantageously have been somewhat bigger.

We think we need say but little in praise of a work that has already evoked very high (of course, very richly deserved) ne-

comiums from several leading journals. Though it is our well-considered conviction that not we, but our children's children, at the earliest, will be the proper biographers of Keshub Chunder Sen, yet even as accumulated material for the coming constructor such memoirs would seem to be necessary ; and, taken all in all, perhaps Mr. Mozoomdar, who is neither an "idolator" nor an "iconoclast" with reference to the subject of the biography, is best fitted to do this dear and useful work. He has, to a very uncommon extent, four main qualifications of a good biographer —full information, rich sympathy, fine discrimination and rare literary excellence. Though to our view Professor Max Muller's "vignette" appears to come much nearer the "original" than does Mr. Mozoomdar's "life-size," yet we shall be doing him bare justice in saying that Mr. Mozoomdar makes a constant and earnest endeavour to secure the agreement of the reader with his conception of any incident or trait in Keshub's life or character, by

supplying all the necessary information for an impartial consideration of the question. And whatever may be our own opinion of some of the sayings, characteristics or acts of the great Brahmo leader, and however we may differ from Mr. Mozoomdar in our estimate of them—and we make no secret that our opinion concerning not a few of these has been modified and the difference consequently minimised by a careful study of the work before us—we have no hesitation in asserting that, for a long time to come, Mr. Mozoomdar's book will remain the standard biography of the great and good "Brahmananda."

XXXI

GOPALA KRISHNA GOKHALE.

(1915)

Being told just at this moment that I have to address the meeting, I feel that the tribute that comes involuntarily, without previous notice or meditation, is always the most genuine; and thus the very few desultory remarks which alone the heaviness of the heart may permit will be valuable only as the spontaneous expression of a sorrowing soul. It has been said that the graves of great men are the gathering-places of all nations. What is true of the grave may be said to be true of the closing event in a great man's life—his translation from this to a higher realm. All differences of race, all diversities of thought, all varieties of sentiment, all distinctions of ideals are converged into one point of universal regret, of conjoint tribute to that prince among men who has long held in fee the warmest regard that the heart of India

could cherish. Therefore the offering need not be enriched with elaborate encomium or rendered weighty with deliberate judgment, if one undertakes to express one's unpremeditated sentiments on a solemn occasion like this.

Those lines of Scott which bemoaned a like national bereavement now come spontaneously to one's mind :

" Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon light is quench'd in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warden silent on the hill. "

Such is the heavy sense of loss which weighs down the nation at the present day. The beacon light is quenched ; the warden rests still; the stately pillar is broken; and the nation is sunk in sorrow—not the gloom of despair, for that would argue the failure of his life ; but the anguish of the aching enquiry, " What next ? Who is to follow ? "

His life can be described briefly yet happily in the lines in *In Memoriam* where the poet speaks of

" some divinely-gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known,
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire."

That was really and truly our nation's hope, Gokhale. Beginning his career in ordinary, if not humble, surroundings ; by sheer dint of native genius and acquired capacity, distancing powerful rivals, not through the adventitious aid of rank or good luck, but by force of powers faithfully employed, ideals loyally followed and services selflessly rendered, he rose to a position of unsurpassed magnificence and irresistible might, so much so that he

inspired the whole nation with the hope of the rich possibilities ever of India. Students of Ranade may remember that remarkable address of his which he named 'the Telang school of thought and action' —an address which, in my humble opinion, could more appropriately be named 'the Ranade school of thought and action.' Of that school of thought and action, the noblest specimen in our generation has been the illustrious worthy whose premature demise we universally mourn. The leading characteristic of that school, said Ranade, is to maintain a golden mean between the stolid indifference which fights shy of progress and the unbridled impulsiveness which takes no note of practical conditions. The typical man of that school is the stout-hearted, puritan soul ever ready to battle for the right, ever pressing inte broader light, always confident but never jubilant, always serious but never dejected.

Such was Gopala Krishna Gokhale. Unto him as to none else, in one generation, be-

longed the right to be honoured with that distinction which even England's greatest orator in the last century held in esteem ; and what Bright was called in his day by the English nation, we can very rightly call our Gokhale. He was, indeed, "the people's tribune"—the upholder of the people's rights, without ceasing to be a pillar of state on which trustfully leaned the monarchy. Whether it was to voice the wishes of the dumb millions, or to bear aloft the battle-banner for the maltreated Indian in self-seeking colonies; whether it was when closeted with the Cabinet Minister who did not disdain to receive wholesome suggestion from one whose heart ever did beat in living touch with the pulse of the nation, or standing up in dauntless singleness, like a Wilberforce, for the rights of a down-trodden people, upholding by unaided voice and unsupported hand the cause of those whose mouths were to be gagged or whose consciences were to be stifled, Gokhale was a prince that steadfastly remained "loyal to the royal" in him.

We owe unto him not merely the memorial of an oil-painting here or a bronze statue there. Unto him we owe that monument which has been stated to be the highest praise in the British Kingdom, the praise accorded to the name of Sir Christopher Wren in the answer, "Look around and behold his monument"—in this case, the monument of a regenerated nation that is to be reared generation after generation unto his memory. Describing the prerogatives of successful statesmen, Gray has said:

"Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes.'

Owing to the unfavourable circumstances under which he had to labour, it might be said that Gopala Krishna Gokhale could only command the applause of listening senates; and it could be said to his credit that he could despise the threats of pain and ruin; but, under his conditions, it was not given to him to scatter plenty over a

smiling land and to read his history in a nation's eyes. But he could whisper hope unto this drooping land, and he could read his history in the nation's heart. Therefore, unto him we owe the everlasting tribute of lifelong imitation. Admiration is only a prelude to imitation. And a great man, it has been said, is great in that he quickens the throb of greatness in those that come in vital touch with him. To us, his humble followers and reverent mourners, it may be given to be great, not of course in the sense in which he was great, but in the sense of looking up to the great, following after the great and thus immortalising the elements of greatness in a nation's life.

XXXII

REV. DR. WILLIAM MILLER.

(1923)

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(1)

Pithapuram,
July 22, 1923.

My dear Friend,

Writing for the first time after that arresting news of the solemn *euthanasia* at Edinburgh last Sunday, what can I think or speak of but the great Soul that has been a load-star unto a host of those "sailng o'er life's solemn main"? By what he was and what he did unto his pupils, he brought home to their "bosoms" the truth of Alexander's "confession" that verily Aristotle was his father in a much more real sense than Philip. Endowed with capacities and opportunities which would undoubtedly have won for him the highest position in the gift of the sovereign or of the people, he elected to dedicate himself to one of the humblest

of humble professions, and by his talent and his character he exalted it to a dignity that thrones or crowns may seldom attain. While his gifts of intellect were unquestionably rich, yet it was his largeness of heart, resoluteness of will, singleness of purpose and firmness of faith that signalised his noble career. Little fitted to judge of greatness, I have somehow always associated his name with that of the great Duke of Wellington. Like that illustrious hero, our revered master, too, "stood four-square to all the winds that blew"; he, too, "sought but Duty's iron crown;" he, too, proved that "the path of duty was the way to glory."

Representative to an uncommon degree will be the meeting over which you will preside tomorrow—representative of the keenest regrets and the profoundest reverence of thousands of fellow-mourners and admirers spread all over the Presidency and beyond it. How true of him the "household word" he himself quoted feelingly on an important occasion—

" He had kept
The whiteness of his life, and thus men
o'er him wept "!
"God accept him, Christ receive him! "

Your companion
in grief and gratitude,
R. Venkata Ratnam.

To
The Hon'ble Rai Bahadur
Sir K. V. Reddi naidu B.A.,B.L., Kt.,
President, Miller Memorial Meeting,
Christian College,
Madras.

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(2)

The esteemed Editor of the *College Magazine* gives me a gracious invitation to send a short contribution to the 'Memorial' number; and I am sincerely grateful for this privilege. Though I greatly doubt my fitness for this distinction, in view of the several learned 'appreciations' from others, I thankfully avail myself of this opportunity, as the kind invitation has it, "to offer this last tribute to the memory of

Dr. Miller." Yet, this can be 'the last tribute' only in a restricted sense; for, while life lasts and memory endures, as each week closes with its Sabbath—likewise the day of the Master's *euthanasia*, the mind shall muse with reverence on the noble virtues of the departed worthy, and the heart shall supplicate grace that the humble life of the disciple might not be altogether inacceptable to the ever-revered *Guru*. Further, as the revolving year brings the solemn 15th of July, the anniversary shall be devoutly kept, even as the auspicious 13th of January used hitherto to be joyfully observed.

'Great' is the word which spontaneously comes upon the lip, as one contemplates that illustrious career. The several admirers will have studied the different phases of that greatness. I choose to dwell, in a few, inadequate words, on the element of the remarkably fruitful life which helped to give to my mind its favourite bent and served to determine for me my life-work—

namely, the Master's pre-eminence as a Teacher.

Dr. Miller was the *Mahamahopadhyaya* of Southern India; and might I humbly add 'Methinks 'tis prize enough' to have been his pupil? No doubt, he was great as an Educationist; but as a Teacher he was incomparable. An Educationist is generally an erudite exponent of "Applied Psychology;" he is (be the quaint phrase excused) a skilful survey-and-settlement officer in the field of the mind. But a Teacher is a 'Gardener' of the heart, a 'pearl-fisher' of the soul. 'Labour,' 'intent study' and 'the strong propensity of Nature' (to borrow Milton's pregnant phrase) combined to make Dr. Miller an ideal teacher. He was gifted, to a rare degree, with a power akin to that vision of the 'Faith beyond the forms of faith,' which 'spies the summer through the winter bud,' or (to adopt his own favourite analogue) which discerns the full-grown tree in the full-formed seed. With a keen gaze, he could limn the complete orb about 'the crescent moon.' He

was a born—aye, a "heaven-born"—teacher.

Hence, he loved his work as Teacher; he devoted all his rich powers and capacities to it. Lord Napier, once Governor of Madras, is reported to have described him as a 'missionary teacher' known for piety and zeal; and that phrase, 'a missionary teacher,' rightly understood, sums up Dr. Miller's great merits as a teacher. With him teaching was the 'mission' of life—the task for which his Maker designed him and to which his Master called him; and it naturally followed that his work was sanctified by piety and inspired by zeal. The poet's definition of teaching as a 'delightful task' was daily illustrated in Dr. Miller's life. Teaching was for him a task with its exacting responsibilities and a delight with its blissful felicities. Alike in preparation, in exposition and in application or illustration, he was almost Herculean in the pains which he took, as he was altogether enviable, one may be sure, in the pure pleasure which he thereby earned for himself.

And 'masterly' was the method adopted by Dr. Miller in his work. He clearly and fully recognised the respective shares of the master and the student in the task prescribed. There be some teachers who seem wholly to cater to their own personal enjoyment, oblivious of the wants of their pupils; and they achieve only 'wondering blanks.' There are, again, not a few who completely obliterate the living selves, teacher and taught alike, in the lifeless routine of teaching; and they produce only 'mechanical automatons.' Dr. Miller, however, was the model *Upadhyaya*—the guiding fellow-student, the path-finding companion. With legitimate pride he refers, in one of his 'messages' to the College-Day Association, to the fact that his College was the pioneer, despite many gloomy forebodings, in instituting 'a consulting-room;' and it did one's heart good to see, after the College hours, that veritable 'beehive' of eager students, diligently preparing the task for the morrow. Yet, as against the latter-day exhortations to leave

the student to himself, to throw the student on his own resources, Dr. Miller believed in direct, detailed teaching, even in the highest classes. He had an instinctive perception of the real requirements and the true interests of the average Indian student. Was the subject a section of the Bible for the Scripture lesson, or a play of Shakespeare for the University studies, the teacher and the taught were *en rapport* —reciprocally absorbed and enraptured. Dr. Miller held, it would seem, that in a 'Classic' there would be no aimless superfluities, no negligible commonplaces—every phrase and every sentence had an import and a purpose. If I might dwell just a little on my own experience, I shall venture to recall my reminiscences of two of the lessons. In the first year class, we had for the scripture work one book of *The Kings*. Would it be grave mis-judgment to say that to most non-Christian readers that book would appear to be nothing much better than a compendium, in the main, of prosaic fact and romantic fiction?

Yet the Master made the study thrice-engaging–interesting as literature, informing as history, edifying as morals. Again, the Shakespeare lesson–that was the dread and the delight of the day, dread unto the truant and delight unto the diligent. And as the Master gently and skilfully led us into the marvels and mysteries of that magic 'Maker,' it was a triple revelation of the spirit—the creative spirit of the Author, the reproductive spirit of the Teacher, the realised spirit of the Learner. And this revelation made an ineffaceable impression, effected a transfiguring change, on the lives of the loyal. It is said that Corpus Christi College has a pelican for the College emblem or badge, to symbolise the 'ministration' of Christ unto the Church, even as the pelican feeds its young one from the very substance of its bosom; and Dr. Miller the Teacher was a true follower of Christ in that he nurtured the growing life of the youth even with the essence of his own mind and heart and soul. He concludes one of the College-Day Messages

with the sublime sentiment, "the Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep"; and truly and verily he was the good shepherd unto the sheep whose tending was the prime concern of his God-illumined and God-accepted life.

(3) *

Duty and desire, gratitude and affection, have drawn us here together. We are here, I believe, neither to mourn a loss nor to pronounce a eulogy. We are here to affirm a faith and to confirm a hope. The first of those noble messages, so eagerly awaited and so respectfully received, which used to be, for over a decade and a half, the centre of attraction in the programme of the College Day Celebrations,concludes with the touching words: "even when the present shadows close finally around me, I have the hope that I shall be remembered for a time by some of you,"

*Based on the opening and closing remarks made as President of the memorial meeting at Cocanada (31-7-23).

as one who, though well aware of having fallen short of all that he should have done or that he might have been, "tried to do the work which he felt fitted and called to do for your good and for the good of India." Now that the shadows have closed finally, baffling the power of mere human ken, shall not this very human hope—it may of right be named the claim or the challenge—to be so remembered, not alone by 'some' but by all of his pupils, and again not merely 'for a time' but during the whole term of their lives, be fully ratified? Rich beyond common measure was the merit, the title, to be thus remembered—to be thus gratefully and reverently enshrined in their recollections—by those that had the good fortune to call him Master. And gathered here on this solemn occasion, render we unto his honoured self the richest homage of esteem for the exemplary life he lived and of gratitude for the ample good he did for the lasting benefit of his numerous pupils and their fatherland.

The moment to say '*adieu*' has arrived; but it is only *au revoir*. The orb, so radiant to our living memories, was long declining along the western slope; and only a pensive farewell shall mark its final set. The fruit was full-ripe and has been 'seasonably gathered;' and the 'fruit-gathering' chant shall be both a *requiem* and a *te Deum*. No doubt, even unto the loftiest-souled, the poet permits, at the hour of translation, a "longing lingering look behind;" and the lone lingerer behind cannot but respond with an answering gaze of wistful wonder cast into the great Beyond. The spasm of bereavement, however, has no place in this solemn leave-taking. It is a temporary snap of 'the sacred tie;' hearts' loves shall be respun into inseparable unity.

This vivid expectation that the broken thread shall be restrung is prompted by the life-long affection that subsisted between the great Master and his countless pupils. The tender solicitude which embraced those large numbers in its ever-increasing compass and the admiring gratitude which

incessantly gained in intensity with age and experience—do they not form a treasure which Time only holds in trust for Eternity? With that modesty which is a true mark of real worth, he hoped to be remembered "for a time;" but can we ever forget him who never forgot us? The memory of those warm words, as they came from the depths of a loving heart, four decades and more of years have served only to keep all the greener: the words, "they are my children," uttered as our father literally 'handed' me and my brother over to his parental keeping, by placing our trusting in his welcoming hands. And how faithfully and lovingly that pledge has been sustained! In a very real sense, Dr. Miller's pupils were his children—the *manasa-putras* of that mighty heart. According to the world's ways, he might be termed "an Elm without his Vine;" but passing rich has been that "dower of clustering charities," which his love has won as a heaven-awarded prize. Men have marvelled how Dr. Miller could, as he actually did, re-

member not only his innumerable pupils but also, in many cases, their relations and friends. The secret of this power lay not in his memory but in his love ; it was not merely a feat of memory, it was a trophy of love. And surely there was a touch of the Divine in that capacious love which had a distinct place for each single object of its self-expression. For, the almost limitless variations of contour and complexion, amidst misleading degrees of similarity, between one creature and another, constitute not merely a rich provision for the charms of Nature but, even more, a convincing witness unto the direct interest of Providence in each individual. Dr. Miller possessed a remarkably retentive memory, even because he cherished such divine love for his 'boys.' It is such love that, in its own proper nature, begets love. It is of such love that the poet's prophecy comes true, 'What is time?' 'Man has Forever.'

And to the labours which this love entailed, to this Heaven-appointed task, Dr.

Miller devoted powers and capacities, resources and energies, of the first order. The best student of his year at the University, he was, true to his own precept, a student all his days—a student alike of books and of the great facts of life. His natural talents and cultivated abilities were of a magnitude quite ample to place him in the fore-front of his contemporaries. His keen acumen, his sound sagacity, his clear grasp of principles, his patient mastery of details, his dispassionate review of issues, his perspicuity of exposition, his untiring industry, his indomitable will to face difficulties, his genuine sympathy for all good causes, his genius for initiative, his undimmed faith in the potency of the Right, would, in any honorable field of work, have won for him the richest laurels of distinction. Had he chosen the career of a statesman, he should undoubtedly have become a "pillar of the State;" it were no exaggeration at all to say that a Cabinet Ministership would have been his by common assent. In sheer vital

energy—in the capacity for sustained application to divers duties—his strength was "as the strength of ten'. He "scorned delights and lived laborious days", though the "spur" to those exertions was something sublimer than the motive which the poet specifies. Again, the advantages of birth, position and fortune could have potently helped him to eminence, even with a less conspicuous endowment of mental and moral worth. A well-known countryman of his, also an educationist, is reported to have observed that, possessing a fraction of Dr. Miller's independent means, he himself would not have troubled to come out to India. Yet all this fund of facilities and opportunities he placed at the feet of his Master to be employed all for His glory. The task set to him—rather, the task gradually unfolded to him—was manifestly of gigantic proportions. Let us try to realise the nature of the work to which he was called, the conditions under which he had to labour, the aims which he had to keep in view,

the spirit by which he was actuated, the interests which he had to satisfy, the views or attitudes which he had to conciliate, the different directions in which his energies had to operate, the prolonged period over which those activities extended, the even tenor and the fine level which had to be maintained, the notable results—so rich in quality and so ample in quantity—which he could harvest, the guiding light and the propelling vigour which he could impart to a host of trusting souls—let us endeavour to focus these several scattered points into one heart-vision; and we shall find full justification to apply to our good Master the grateful and glowing terms in which Matthew Arnold sings the glory of his illustrious father—that, with no langour in the heart, no weakness in the word, no weariness on the brow, here was an angelic being, 'radiant with ardour divine,' set up as a star of hope to light our path, beyond 'the bound of the waste,' on 'to the City of God.'

India's debt to Dr. Miller, who knows,

who can estimate, in its full measure? He landed on her shores, when hardly twenty-five years old, with an extraordinary reserve of physical and mental vigour; he bade her a reluctant farewell, as a worn-out, half-blind old man verging on the Biblical terminus of threescore and ten. With him "the ideal life was the life of service"; and for full forty-five years he spent himself out in the service of India. The labours of that prolonged period, so rich in piety and zeal, he replenished with money contributions to the tune of some lakhs of rupees. He looked upon himself as the 'steward' of his Lord; and the closing account rendered of that stewardship is a princely bequest to the College and the Country which he loved so warmly and toiled for so selflessly. He sought no 'wages' save the 'wages of Virtue'—"the wages of going on and not to die." With the retrospect of half-a-century before his mind, he owned, "I feel thankful to have had the work of my life assigned to me among you;" and again, "your welfare

and the welfare of your country have still a dominating hold on my accustomed thoughts and deepest feelings." Here indeed, was a noble Friend of India; when and how often can India expect to see his like again ?-- Unto us, his students, the richest legacy of the Master was his inspiring life. "The Professor must inspire," remarks one of the greatest living authorities on University Education ; and we ever found in the Master " inspiration " itself. " Inspiration " to live a loyal life radiated from him,as "virtue 'from a saintly soul, in all directions. This was in happy accord with his theory that a student should start as a " fellow-worker, " and be elevated to " a friend in council " with the master, in pursuit of a common end. He was thus one of that blessed band— Heaven's favoured few, the enduring memorials of whose life-work could be pointed out in the convincing "*Circumspice.*" And if only grace be vouchsafed unto us to realise in ourselves and to transmit to those around us some of that 'inspiration',

then, though the world, with its customary phrase of time and sense, might sigh out, Dr. Miller is dead, from the depths of our believing hearts would spring up the acclamation of Eternal Hope, Long Live the Master !

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